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Hafa Adai!

Saipan Tribune

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State of emergency ‘possible’

By JOEL PINAROC
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REPORTER

Acting governor Ralph DLG. Torres and Attorney General Edward Manibusan have started discussions on the possible declaration of a state of emergency for the CNMI in light of a massive communications breakdown last week that continues until today.

See EMERGENCY on Page 4

IT&E, Docomo team up on ‘aerial fiber’

By DENNIS B. CHAN
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REPORTER

IT&E and Docomo were hanging “aerial fiber” on Tinian power poles to improve as soon as last night or today Saipan’s Internet capacity and connection to the rest of the world, IT&E sales and marketing manager Hans Mickelson told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

On Sunday night, the Internet-starved hit their Facebook pages again, after nearly five days of being offline due to damage to an undersea fiber optic cable between Tinian and Saipan. Internet users, albeit on limited and slow connectivity, went online after 10:45pm, the time IT&E restored public Internet.

As of press time, Saipan’s current Internet capacity depended on a repaired microwave link from Mt. Tapochau to Tinian.

Mickelson described the “aerial fiber” as actual physical glass fiber on the poles. He said they were working with Docomo, Commonwealth Utilities Corp., and Telesource on this work.

“We are hoping that tonight or tomorrow that will be provisioned and that it will be fired up,” he said yesterday.

See IT&E on Page 4

Liberation carnival grounds reopen today

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

The 2015 Liberation Festivities carnival grounds will reopen today, Tuesday, after being closed for two weeks due to tropical storms Chan-Hom and Nangka passing through the Commonwealth.

» Reduction of vendor fees mulled

Skywalker Communications Group public relations manager Kiki Chen confirmed that the carnival grounds would continue today.

Chen said they have been already been preparing for the reopening of the 2015 Liberation Festivities.

See CARNIVAL on Page 4

Workers are seen installing the Liberation Day canopies at the Fishing Base in Garapan yesterday. The annual Liberation Day parade will push through this Saturday morning after it was cancelled twice due to two typhoons.
FERDIE DE LA TORRE

‘No Internet, no remittance’

» Relatives not able to send money home
» Wire transfer companies incurring losses

By FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA
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REPORTER

While some people worry about not being able to update their social media accounts because of the lack of Internet connection on Saipan, others have more pressing concerns—not being able to send money to their families in different parts

See REMITTANCE on Page 4

INSIDE

NATION
Legions of people cheered as South Carolina lowered the Confederate battle flag.
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WORLD
Mexico’s most powerful drug lord, Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, escapes from prison.
» PAGE 16

LIFE & STYLE
Olivia Jordan of Oklahoma was crowned Miss USA, beating out 50 other contestants.
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Local

‘Club C’ owner is suing Finance to stop ‘Club 88’

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The owner of electronic gaming facility Club C is suing the Department of Finance for allegedly authorizing Mariana Entertainment LLC to operate an electronic gaming facility at the Saipan Ocean View Hotel in Garapan.

Strategic Gaming Solutions Inc., which operates Club C at the Kanoa Resort in Susupe, filed the lawsuit in the Superior Court to prevent Finance from allowing Mariana Entertainment LLC from operating the electronic gaming facility at the Saipan Ocean View Hotel in violation of Public Law 18-30, also known as the Tourism Entertainment and Destination Act of 2013.

» Manager says Ocean View Hotel has 101 rooms in compliance with the law

Strategic Gaming counsel Steven P. Pixley said that under the act, gaming activities must be operated only within Saipan in an enclosed area at a hotel or resort that has 100 or more rooms or fewer than 100 rooms so long as the hotel is attached to a golf course.

Pixley said Ocean View Hotel did not meet the 100-room requirement at the time Finance issued an electronic gaming license to Mariana Entertainment LLC.

Saipan visited the Ocean View Hotel yesterday afternoon and a staff said they have 100 rooms.

Saipan Tribune also observed that an electronic gaming facility called “Club 88” located in front and on the first floor of Ocean View Hotel already has staff ready for business. No customer was inside and the staff said they are just waiting for the license.

Club 88 manager Gus Noble said Ocean View Hotel has 101 rooms and that when they got the conditional license from Finance 12 months ago, there were already 101 rooms.

Noble said the hotel owner issued affidavits to confirm that there are 101 rooms and that Finance twice visited them and physically counted the rooms and confirmed 101 rooms.

Noble said that they were supposed to open business last July 4, but the typhoons, communications problem, and Club C’s complaint slowed down the issuance of the license.

FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Club 88 manager Gus Noble shows *Saipan Tribune* yesterday the 60 brand new video slot machines in their facility located on the first floor of Saipan Ocean View Hotel in Garapan.

“It’s a totally frivolous claim…without any basis in fact and without checking the facts,” he said.

Noble said Club 88, which is designed for the Asian tourists market, has 60 brand new video slot machines from the U.S. mainland.

He said they also have a VIP room and a small bar for entertainment.

In Strategic Gaming’s complaint, Pixley said Guerrero was informed by the Marianas Visitors Authority that Saipan Ocean View Hotel opened in 1987 with 87 rooms and that in February 2014, the hotel expanded to 90 rooms.

Pixley said based upon information and belief, Mariana Entertainment LLC intended to start operation of this facility last July 4.

Pixley said Strategic Gaming, which operates “Club C” at the Kanoa Resort, was issued an electronic gaming license in 2014.

Pixley said prior to the issuance of this license, Finance required Strategic Gaming to undergo at its expense an extensive background check of its officers, shareholders and directors.

In addition, Pixley said, Strategic Gaming was required to demonstrate full compliance with applicable laws, including building codes, fire safety regulations, Americans with Disabilities Act compliance, Commonwealth Zoning laws, etc.

Pixley said Strategic Gaming invested hundreds of thousands of dollars in the “Club C” facility to ensure full compliance with the high standards contemplated by P.L. 18-30.

“This investment included state of the art security cameras to ensure compliance with laws and for the protection of its customers,” he said.

Pixley said Marianas Entertainment LLC was not subjected to the same degree of scrutiny by Finance.

Pixley said in an effort to resolve this matter, Strategic Gaming, through its treasurer Juan T. Guerrero, submitted a letter to Attorney General Edward Manibusan, following up on their Open Government Act request and informing the AG of its concerns. Pixley said a second letter to the AG was sent on June 25, 2015.

“To date, Strategic Gaming Solutions has not received any response to these two letters,” Pixley said.

2015-2016 Application For Free School Meals is now available at all public schools and at the Public School System FNS Office

PUBLIC RELEASE STATEMENT REGARDING THE NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH AND BREAKFAST PROGRAMS AVAILABLE AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

The Public School System Food and Nutrition Services Program today announced its policy for children *unable* to pay the full price of meals served under the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program. Regardless of financial standing and participation in programs such as WIC or NAP, ***a new free school meal application must be completed and submitted each school year to receive free school meal benefits.***

Meal prices for the 2015-2016 school year will remain the same as the previous year. Students may buy a subsidized school breakfast for $0.50. Additional breakfasts can be purchased for $2.25 at elementary schools and $2.60 at secondary schools. Students may purchase a school lunch for $0.75. Additional lunches can be purchased for $3.50 at elementary schools and $4.00 at secondary schools.

Application forms are now available at the PSS Food and Nutrition Services Office and are being sent to all public schools with a notice to parents or guardians. Applications are available at Tinian Elementary School and Rota Junior High School as well. To apply for free meals, households must fill out the application and return it to the school or to the PSS Food and Nutrition Services office. The information provided on the application will be used for the purpose of determining eligibility and may be verified at any time during the school year by school or other program officials. Applications may be submitted at any time during the school year. The application can be downloaded from the PSS website at http://www.cnmipss.org/fns/

To obtain free meals for children for whose households receive Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) benefits, an adult member needs only to list the names of the school children, give a valid food stamp case number for each child, sign his/her name, list his/her social security number, and return the application to the school office.

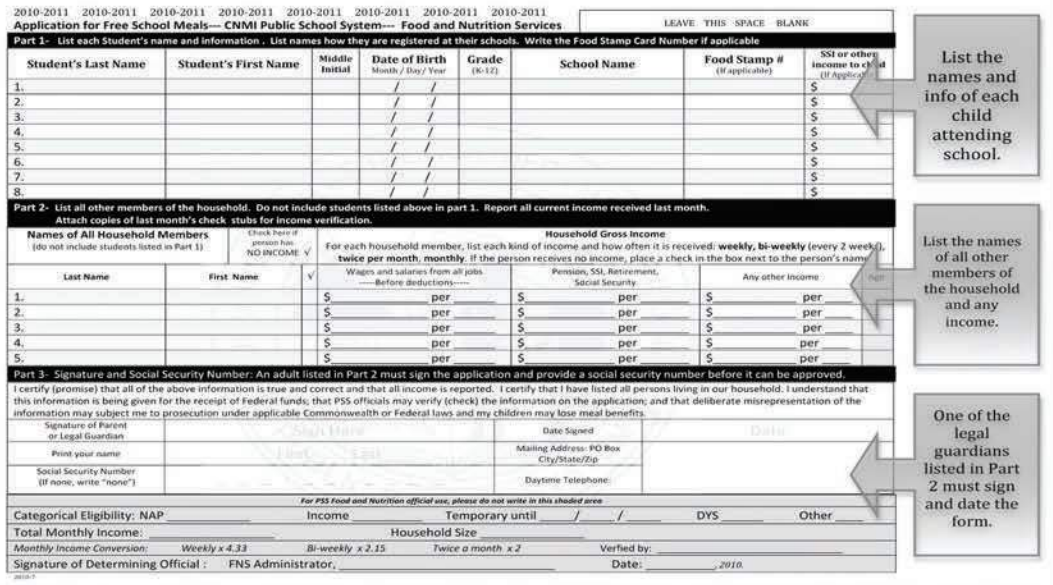
For school officials to determine eligibility for free meals of households not receiving Nutrition Assistance Program (NAP) benefits, the household must provide the following information requested on the application: names of all household members, and the social security number of the adult household member who signs the application. In lieu of a social security number, the household may indicate that the signer does not possess a social security number. Also, the income received by each household member must be provided by amount and source (wages, SSI, child support, etc.). For verification purposes, copies of the two most recent check stubs must be included with the application. Failure to include these items will delay the processing of the application.

Under the provisions of the free meal policy, the PSS Food and Nutrition Services Manager will review applications and determine eligibility. If a parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the ruling of the official, he/she may wish to discuss the decision with the determining official on an informal basis. If the parent/guardian wishes to make a formal appeal, he/she may make a request either orally or in writing to: Mr. Dale Roberts, PSS Food and Nutrition Services Program Manager located in government house 1251 located on Capital Hill, Saipan.

If a household member becomes unemployed or if the household size changes, the family should contact the FNS Office. Such changes may make the household eligible for free meals if the household income falls at or below the IEG levels listed in the chart, and they may reapply at that time.

In most cases, foster children are also eligible for these benefits. If a household has foster children living with them and wishes to apply for free school meals, the household should complete an application for a family of one or contact the FNS office for more information.

The information provided by the household on the application is confidential. PSS is authorized to release student free and school meal eligibility status only to persons directly connected with the administration and enforcement of federal or state educational programs.


2010-2011 2010-2011 2010-2011 2010-2011 2010-2011 2010-2011 2010-2011 2010-2011
Application for Free School Meals--- CNMI Public School System--- Food and Nutrition Services
LEAVE THIS SPACE BLANK
Part 1- List each Student's name and information . List names how they are registered at their schools. Write the Food Stamp Card Number if applicable
Student's Last Name | Student's First Name | Middle Initial | Date of Birth Month / Day / Year | Grade (K-12) | School Name | Food Stamp # (If applicable) | SSI or other income to child (If applicable)
1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8.
Part 2- List all other members of the household. Do not include students listed above in part 1. Report all current income received last month. Attach copies of last month's check stubs for income verification.
Names of All Household Members (do not include students listed in Part 1) | Check here if person has NO INCOME | Household Gross Income: For each household member, list each kind of income and how often it is received: weekly, bi-weekly (every 2 weeks), twice per month, monthly. If the person receives no income, place a check in the box next to the person's name.
Last Name | First Name | Wages and salaries from all jobs ---Before deductions--- | Pension, SSI, Retirement, Social Security | Any other income
1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Part 3- Signature and Social Security Number: An adult listed in Part 2 must sign the application and provide a social security number before it can be approved.
I certify (promise) that all of the above information is true and correct and that all income is reported. I certify that I have listed all persons living in our household. I understand that this information is being given for the receipt of Federal funds; that PSS officials may verify (check) the information on the application; and that deliberate misrepresentation of the information may subject me to prosecution under applicable Commonwealth or Federal laws and my children may lose meal benefits.
Signature of Parent or Legal Guardian | Date Signed
Print your name | Mailing Address- PO Box City/State/Zip
Social Security Number (If none, write "none") | Daytime Telephone
For PSS Food and Nutrition official use, please do not write in this shaded area
Categorical Eligibility: NAP ____ Income ____ Temporary until ____/____/____ DYS ____ Other ____
Total Monthly Income: ____ Household Size ____
Monthly Income Conversion: Weekly x 4.33 Bi-weekly x 2.15 Twice a month x 2 Verfied by: ____
Signature of Determining Official : FNS Administrator, ____ Date: ____, 2010

List the names and info of each child attending school.

List the names of all other members of the household and any income.

One of the legal guardians listed in Part 2 must sign and date the form.

2015-2016 Federal Income Guidelines (IEG) for Free Meal Eligibility. If your household income falls within these guidelines your children MAY be eligible to receive free school meals.

Household Size	Annual	Monthly	2x per Month	Bi-weekly	Weekly
1	$ 15,301	$ 1,276	$ 638	$ 589	$ 295
2	20,709	1,726	863	797	399
3	26,117	2,177	1,089	1,005	503
4	31,525	2,628	1,314	1,213	607
5	36,933	3,078	1,539	1,421	711
6	42,341	3,529	1,765	1,629	815
7	47,749	3,980	1,990	1,837	919
8	53,157	4,430	2,215	2,045	1,023
Add'l member, Add.....	+ 5,408	+ 451	+ 226	+ 208	+ 104

Any questions regarding the application should be directed to the determining official.

Children determined eligible for free meals last school year will receive free meals for up to 30 days after the opening of school on August 25, 2015. **To avoid delays in free school meal services due to processing, all applications should be completed and submitted to PSS FNS before September 15, 2015.**

Any questions regarding the application should be directed to the determining official. The PSS FNS office can be reached on Saipan: 664-3901 / 3902 or fax 664-3717, Tinian: 237-4106/4105, Rota: 237-4046/4041/4042

CUC board majority ousts Songao from vice chairmanship

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The self-described "majority" of the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board ousted Diego Songao from the position of vice chairman last week because they said they wanted someone "who worked with them."

Eric San Nicolas, from Tinian, is now vice chairman. The CUC board also voted to name director Joe Torres, from Saipan, to the position of treasurer. This position had been unfilled.

Directors San Nicolas, Torres, Albert Taitano, Chris Concepcion, and Adelina Roberto voted in favor of removing Songao from the vice-chairmanship and replacing him with San Nicolas. Songao abstained from voting. Director David Sablan voted against.

For the treasurer position, all board members voted for Torres to fill the position, after some questions from Sablan on whether Torres understood the ramifications and responsibilities of the position, and if Torres had actually read the board's bylaws on the position.

Taitano motioned to include the election of the vice chairman on the agenda at the beginning of their meeting.

When asked by Songao for a reason, Taitano said they want to elect a vice chair that "works with the majority" of the board members.

To this, Songao said if his vote is not what the majority wants, then he has all the privilege to do so.

In an interview yesterday, Torres said that "having board members that can work together and accomplish things is needed," given CUC's financial situation.

"With this group, I feel it is a work team. It is transparent," he said, referring to the group that voted to replace Songao with San Nicolas.

CDA implications?

Songao, who appeared upset by the board majority's intentions, said at the meeting that he was there to represent the Commonwealth Development Authority, a preferred stockholder of CUC.

Songao pointed to previous "surface discussions" among CDA board members to "protect its interests."

In 2004, a memorandum of agreement between CDA and CUC turned more than $200 million in debt plus interest into $45 million in preferred stock held by CDA. Since 2009, when the MOA was executed, CUC has not put a penny on its over $1 million in dividend payments per year, deferring all payments.

CUC, at the recent direction of the board, is now requesting a moratorium to debt payments and has expressed a preference to not include debt payment in future tariff rates.

"If this board does not take the responsibility to ensure CUC meets its obligations, and also provide guidance and direction for a good, financial standing for CUC, CDA might come in to take over management of CUC," Songao said.

» Board elects San Nicolas in his stead

To this, Torres said, "That's not a threat, vice chair?"

Songao said it was not a threat but it was CDA's position because of its concerns with the way CUC is handling its financial obligations.

Sablan described Songao's removal from the vice chairmanship because he was not in the majority a "poor reason." He asked if the real reason was because they did not want Songao and himself on this board.

"We are deliberating [and it is] sometimes heated…but to just remove him from the vice chairmanship, to squelch him, I don't think is a good enough reason," he said.

In an interview, Songao said he should be able to speak his mind and to protect the interests of CDA. "I should make decisions according to fiscal responsibility, according to how we should have CUC be responsible for its operations," he said. "…I'd like to see that we maintain that CUC meets its obligations and put CUC in a good financial standing."

On Songao's "threat" to have CDA move to take over CUC, Torres said yesterday that Songao was only one member of the CDA board. The board decides issues, not one member, he said.

"The way Songao made his comment is threatening the people of the Commonwealth… That's not right," Torres said, adding that if CDA was a major stockholder, why hadn't they pumped money into CUC?

Treasurer

Before the vote for treasurer, Sablan said the office of treasurer is a major responsibility, and is responsible for all the financial affairs and is subject to penalties if anything goes wrong. "I think you need to look at the ramifications of that responsibility," Sablan told Torres.

Songao had also asked if the board had a set of responsibilities in its rules and regulations, and if every disbursement that came out of CUC would have to be signed by the treasurer.

To this, CUC legal counsel James Sirok said the treasurer signs checks as one of the signatories and manages accounts.

Sablan said that from his experience in other organizations, if anything goes wrong financially, the "treasurer goes to jail."

Sablan asked Torres if he was ready to handle that responsibility, and has read the responsibility in the b-laws and what it entailed.

"I don't foresee any problems," Torres said.

"Have you read the bylaws...? I think it is important for you to tell us," Sablan asked again.

Torres said yes. San Nicolas said they have utmost confidence in Torres.

Next moves

While the term was not used last week, the "minority" in the board are clearly Sablan and Songao. *Saipan Tribune* learned there have been frustrations from the board majority over CUC management—from their counsel, to executive director, to public relations officer—raising questions about what the board majority's next moves might be.

In April, the board voted out Sablan from the chairmanship. In May, executive director Alan Fletcher announced he would not be renewing his contract with CUC. The board had made a decision to not continue with Fletcher, *Saipan Tribune* learned then.

The majority has also raised questions whether the CUC board should have "their own" legal counsel. The counsel for the CUC board and management is James Sirok. The majority has also raised concerns on moves by previous chair Sablan and vice chair Songao to interview individuals for CUC's top positions without their knowledge. One of these positions was for current chief financial officer Matthew Yaquinto.

However, when asked, Torres said he did not prefer to use the word "majority." "It separates people," he said of this term. "It's a working group," he said instead. "Songao and Sablan can be part of the working team if they want to."

When asked to comment on the board's recent moves, Torres said he would like to put the issue concerning Fletcher "to rest." "Let's move forward for what is best to serve the public."

Torres went on to say this working team's goal is to keep rates the same, resolve a payment plan with the local hospital, and improve CUC's distribution systems.

On the other hand, the board's "minority," management, and consultants see a need for rate increases to protect the utility from collapse, given millions in unpaid utility bills owed to them, among other reasons. They also aim to take a hard look at hospital's finances and see what it can pay them as its debt sits at around $16 million and growing.

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Saipan Mayor's Office still seeks more funds for heavy equipment

The Saipan Mayor's Office still need funds to acquire more heavy equipment for road repairs on secondary roads.

Although the office is okay now, it still needs to get more heavy equipment, said special assistant Henry Hofschneider.

"We still have limited funding from our federal grant and we will be putting out a request for proposals…We still have about $71,000 left and we're going to spend most—at least $50,000 for heavy equipment and $20,000 some for heavy equipment parts or training," Hofschneider said.

The Saipan Mayor's Office currently has one dump truck, two riding mowers, two backhoes, and equipment for maintenance that they recently purchased through a $413,000 grant from the Office of Insular Affairs.

They have also used $100,000 from last year's appropriation from the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation for a bucket truck and other equipment.

Hofschneider said they plan to apply for OIA funding once again, and may apply for the same amount that they secured last year.

"We might ask for the same amount because we still need a small road compactor, payloader, and a smaller dump truck," he said.

The deadline for the grant is in October.

The lack of funds to add more full-time employees has also been an issue. The additional FTEs will be utilized as community workers. ***(Jayson Camacho)***

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
TINIAN MUNICIPAL SCHOLARSHIP BOARD
Municipality of Tinian and Aguiguan
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Tinian, MP 96952
Tel: (670) 433-2200 • Fax: (670) 433-1819
Email: tinianscholarship@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9910(a), the Tinian Municipal Scholarship Board hereby gives notice that there will be a Regular Meeting on Wednesday, July 15, 2015 at 1:30 p.m. at Northern Marianas College, Tinian campus Room A, at San Jose Village, Tinian.

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY
1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of Agenda
4. Adoption of Minutes

II. ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT
III. EXECUTIVE SESSION[2]
IV. NEW BUSINESS
1. Review and amendment of current policy

V. MISCELLANEOUS MATTER
VI. SCHEDULE OF NEXT BOARD MEETING
VII. ADJOURNMENT

/S/ JULIAN U. HOFSCHNEIDER/Chairman

[1] We ask that remarks be limited to 3 minutes each. Everyone is welcomed to submit written comments on the day of the meeting

[2] Pursuant to 1 CMC section 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

[3] Individuals with special needs requiring special accommodations, please contact the TMSB office at least 48 hour prior to schedule meeting for assistance.

COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS OFFICIAL SEAL

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

CNMI Public Meetings regarding CJMT DEIS

The CNMI Government will be hosting a Public Meeting on the proposed actions of the Commonwealth Joint Military Training Draft Environmental Impact Statement on July 15th to the 17th in order to provide the general public with a non-technical understanding of the complex document and offer detailed assistance on how to submit public comments to the Department of Defense.

The following is the meeting schedule for Saipan and Tinian residents:

July 15, 2015	Multi-Purpose Center	5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
July 16, 2015	Tinian Jr/Sr High School	5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.
July 17, 2015	Multi-Purpose Center	5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

All residents are encouraged to attend and learn how to best voice your concerns about the upcoming military activities in the CNMI.

Ada asks court to set aside her perjury conviction

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Leyda I. Ada has asked the federal court to set aside her perjury conviction and acquit her of the charge.

Ada, through counsel Mark B. Hanson, asserted that there is no evidence that she was aware of the contents of a form for financial affidavit completed by the U.S. Probation officer.

Hanson said there is no evidence that Ada had "cash on hand" as that term is used in the form.

Last June 26, a federal jury acquitted Ada of the charges of conspiracy to commit money laundering and money laundering but found her guilty of perjury.

Perjury has a maximum prison term of five years, *Saipan Tribune* learned. Ada's sentencing will be on Nov. 13, 2015.

The 12 jurors found Ada guilty of perjury when she signed "no" to the question in a form if she has any cash on hand or money in savings or checking accounts.

In order to determine whether Ada could afford her own lawyer when she was arrested, she was required by the court to truthfully complete a financial affidavit.

In the paragraph titled "Employment," Ada also checked the "no" box indicating that she was not employed.

According to the indictment, Ada's statements were false because she knew that she had $4,000 in cash at her house and had access to at least two bank accounts at First Hawaiian Bank.

In Ada's motion for acquittal, Hanson said there is no evidence that Ada had any money of her own in any savings or checking account that would make even an adopted admission in the financial affidavit form potentially false. Hanson said similarly, no rational juror could have found on the evidence at trial that Ada acted willfully, deliberately, and with knowledge with regard to the statements contained in the form.

The lawyer said Probation officer Margarita Wonenberg testified that she completed the form, not Ada.

Hanson said the Wonenberg purposely did not inform Ada of important rights she had prior to completing the form portion of the pretrial services interview, including the right to be presented by counsel and the fact that the form could not be used against her except in a trial for perjury on the form itself.

REMITTANCE

From Page 1

of the world.

Aside from banks, wire transfers are one of the services that just cannot function without a reliable and speedy Internet connection.

Companies such as LBC and Western Union are still not able to process transactions since Wednesday last week.

Even though Internet access was made available to businesses yesterday morning, its almost negligible capacity is not enough for wire transfers to work.

Upon learning that Internet connections were back up yesterday, Victor Villamon had hoped to finally send money to the Philippines but was dismayed to find out that he still could not do so.

"This is my second time to come here," Villamon said.

"The Internet is too slow, we still cannot process anything," LBC employer Romeo Quizon said.

"It is very inconvenient for our customers because normally they expect to be able to send money and all of a sudden, we have no capability," Western Union's Juanpan Guerrero said.

LBC manager Val Gatchalian said they received some complaints from their customers who were already irate as almost a week has passed and they still cannot send money home.

He said some customers are worried about payments that have to be made or dependents not getting their allowance.

"One even thought the relative just didn't want to send money and the family member became angry," Gatchalian narrated, showing how much the Internet problem on Saipan is rippling to other places.

Since Wednesday, LBC has been operating half-days only as they were not able to process transactions anyway. However, yesterday, they stayed until the afternoon hoping that speedy Internet access will become available.

Gatchalian said they are losing about $1,000 to $2,000 per day in terms of actual revenue due to the Internet problem. Peak days are during the weekend, especially Friday when most offices have their payday.

Reaching out to IT&E

Western Union said that remittances of about $500,000 worth were lost because of the network problem that has been going on for five days now.

"The business loss is huge," Guerrero said, adding that there are 11 agents on island that are mostly dependent on wire transaction revenues.

He added that they are sending a letter to IT&E to formally ask them how long the Internet problem is really going to take.

"We want it in black and white," he said.

Guerrero hopes that IT&E will "get its act together" and that it will give credit to its customers. He also added that the backup system failing to support the network just "shows how bad their system is."

"This should not have happened," Guerrero added.

Alternatives

According to Gatchalian, they are looking at alternative ways on how to send money should the network problem take long.

He said they will ask their compliance office in the U.S. mainland if they can transfer money through their offices there.

Rustan's Foreign Exchange, on the other hand, is able to process bank-to-bank transfers, which take longer for recipients to receive, unlike wire transfers. They said pick up services are not possible at this time because of the Internet problem.

EMERGENCY

From Page 1

Torres said he is only waiting for service provider IT&E to give an update on the status of repairs on a damaged submarine fiber optic cable and updates on complete restoration of communication lines.

Torres was supposed to meet with IT&E yesterday, but the service provider asked to move the meeting to today.

The office of the acting governor early yesterday received a press release saying that IT&E was able to restore public Internet as of Sunday at 10:45pm, in addition to basic services.

"After getting an update from IT&E, the AG and I will talk again," Torres said.

Manibusan confirmed that talks on a state of emergency were brought up as early as last week when the massive communications outage started.

He echoed Torres' comment, saying a declaration will depend on how long the outage will last.

"Once a timetable is in, we can then decide what to do," Manibusan said, adding that he and Torres are "looking at other alternatives," and if necessary, "possibly declare something."

According to the AG, a state of emergency will give the CNMI government "the ability to mobilize resources and mobilize people to go to Tinian to do their work there."

"We can move into Guam if we have to," he said.

Tinian and Rota communication lines are back online ahead of Saipan, where Internet access speeds are still very slow.

The submarine fiber optic cable that links Saipan to the rest of the world was damaged Thursday last week. High seas and rough undersea currents brought by Typhoon Chan-Hom were said to have caused the damage.

Repair of the submarine cable was projected to last three weeks, while repairs on a backup microwave dish was expected to be completed in a matter of days.

Payroll

Finance Secretary Larissa Larson said the department was heavily hit particularly last week.

"The impact on [the] Finance Department was very significant," Larson said, adding that the outage caused delays on drawdowns on federal funds and severely affected the department's reporting activities, among other things.

One immediate impact was the payroll processing for government employees, which Finance currently handles.

Larson said there was a "slow payroll on Friday because they cut us off in the middle of payroll processing."

She said the outage compelled the department to manually process some 1,500 checks for government employees who then had to rush to the bank to have the check changed into cash.

"But they caught us in the middle of that, so we had to manually type out checks," she said, adding that the employees would normally have gotten a direct deposit into their account.

Larson, in a TV interview, also discussed the possibility of moving to Tinian where Internet access was restored way ahead of Saipan.

Damages assessment

Finance will soon assess the damage wrought by the communication outage on the government.

Larson said there is no estimate yet—in monetary terms—of the damage caused but her department and other CNMI departments "are on top of it."

Larson, in an emergency Cabinet meeting last week, brought up the possibility of IT&E giving back credit to government, which was severely affected by the communications outage. Larson said her department will soon formalize this request.

"We do feel that the disruptions to the Department of Commerce and to our department warrants it," Larson said.

The call for the service provider to possibly offer compensation to the CNMI has since then gained support.

Manibusan said people "need to be compensated in one way or another."

Manibusan said one scenario is that some people will need to make payments online that are due. "But if you're unable to [make the payment on time], then you'll be charged late fees," he said.

Rep. Joseph "Lee Pan" Guerrero (R-Saipan) earlier said he is supporting the call, adding that credit should not just be given to government, but also to private business and members of the community.

Rep. Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) said he is sure that "everyone was affected" by the communications outage including delays in online transactions, particularly for banks. But he said he prefers to wait and see what updates the service carrier could provide.

Radio

For the Department of Fire and Emergency Services, the effect of the communications breakdown was mostly confined to its administrative processes.

DFES chief Clyde Norita said his department relied on radio to carry out their duties.

"We do have a reliable radio system in place, so thankfully, the effect [of the outage] did not affect out firefighters' duties," he said, adding that firefighters continuously coordinated with Tinian and Rota counterparts through radio.

Norita said he was more concerned with the recent typhoon.

Government offices

Government offices on Capital Hill, meanwhile, were caught by surprise last week by the massive communications outage, although the impact seems to be minimal.

A staff at the Legislature said the Internet outage did not have a major impact on operations. Documents had to be hand-delivered within the different offices because the email system was down, the staff said.

IT&E

From Page 1

Eight Docomo workers were sent to Tinian with a spool truck on Saturday morning to start work through all day Sunday and yesterday to hang a 12-strand aerial fiber, according to Mickelson. The fiber would go from the IT&E Tinian microwave site down it their central office in San Jose village, he said.

Once hooked up, the microwave connection from Tapochau to Tinian is expected to connect to Tinian's fiber optic connection with Rota, Guam, and the rest of the world.

"We are going to pick up much more capacity," Mickelson said, though he could not specify yet by how much.

As for the damaged undersea fiber optic line from Saipan to Tinian, which triggered the CNMI-wide network outage last week, IT&E has identified a repair ship from Taiwan.

The ship is under contract with IT&E per a maintenance agreement, Mickelson said.

He could not say yet when the ship will be on its way but said IT&E is "coordinating" with them. He said it takes them 10 or 15 days to get to Saipan.

"Once we work out the logistics, we will authorize them to sail," he said, noting that weather is another factor in repairing the cable.

Criticism

IT&E has been on the receiving end of frustration and criticisms over the last week after the CNMI-wide network blackout halted bank transactions, cancelled flights, and shut down Internet connection. The outage is expected to cost a significant amount to CNMI revenues as commerce has struggled.

One point levied against IT&E is that it laid its fiber optic cable near rocks, making it susceptible to damage.

To this, Mickelson said IT&E took the best pathway at the time they laid the cable over 15 years ago, noting that conditions over the years were not going to stay the same.

"We took the path of least resistance at the time," avoiding all objects, he said.

Mickelson said they do annual routine checks on their line as well as diagnostic tests and contract local divers to inspect their cable.

He said this maintenance costs in the hundreds of thousands of dollars.

He also noted that they placed their cable on the leeward side of the island, not on the Pacific side.

To GTA's reported interest in competing with IT&E, Mickelson said this was possible.

He said anybody could come into the market. "We've never been opposed to that," he said.

On rumors of a class-action lawsuit against IT&E, Mickelson did not comment on this directly but chose to "accentuate the positives," referring to free prepaid services for local calls, and free voice for CDMA services, among others, that IT&E has offered during the network outage.

CARNIVAL

From Page 1

"It will be open today," Chen said.

The carnival grounds at Garapan Fishing Base have also received a new look since the shipment of the canopies came in. Activities and vendors will resume, including live entertainment. However, carnival rides will be arriving in mid-July.

Posters and flyers have also been strung along Beach Road leading to the Garapan tourist district to attract visitors.

Saipan Mayor's Office special assistant Henry Hofschneider said that everyone have been prepping up for the reopening of the carnival grounds.

Hofschneider noted that they would continue the Liberation Day parade this Saturday, July 18, after being cancelled twice on July 4 and July 11.

When asked whether the cancellations of the carnival would somehow lead to a cut in the rental fee for vendors, Hofschneider said there still hasn't been any complaints from the vendors. He said the storm was unavoidable and that there was nothing that could have been done.

In a separate interview, Skywalker Communications business director Elvis Yu said their company, the 2015 Liberation committee, and the Saipan Mayor's Office will discuss the matter at a future date.

"We've already discussed in regards to the reducing the fees. However, we will meet with the mayor [David M. Apatang] and discuss more on the matter and make a decision," Yu said.

Lawmaker wants 'old' submarine cable replaced

By JOEL PINAROC
joel_pinaroc@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A lawmaker is looking into the possibility of linking the CNMI to a new submarine cable system being planned by Guam's GTA.

Rep. Francis Taimanao (Ind-Saipan), who chairs the House Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation, and Communications, said he has already requested to meet with GTA on Wednesday.

He said the whole committee endorsed the meeting.

Taimanao said he would ask GTA executives to do a presentation of their system, and to explore the possibility of another fiber optic cable for the CNMI.

The lawmaker said GTA just recently became part of a big submarine cable consortium that is "already moving forward with plans to lay fiber optic cables across the Pacific."

"Yap and Palau has already showed interest to be linked into that system," he said.

Taimanao said the IT&E-owned cable that the CNMI has now is "over 20 years old after it was launched in the 1980s," and that GTA's fiber optic cable "is probably the most updated fiber optic system we have."

"Although GTA's efforts in recent years to enter the telecommunications market here in the CNMI has been tied up in the courts, it is my hope that this challenge alone does not dissuade GTA's interest to do business in the CNMI," Taimanao said.

He said a formal letter has already been sent to GTA for the meeting and that he is only awaiting confirmation.

Last Thursday, a damaged submarine fiber optic cable and a backup system that also needed tweaking effectively isolated Saipan from the rest of the world.

IT&E executives were immediately summoned to Capital Hill to give an update on the outage.

The outage affected banks and virtually all industries relying on online transactions had to shut down, not to mention the thousands of residents who use the Internet.

Although basic communications services are back as of today, there have been reports of erratic mobile services and Internet access remains very slow.

After 2 tropical cyclones, fresh fish supply is hard to come by

By FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA

A cart that is usually loaded with fish-filled iceboxes was left with only two containers that actually had fish in them. Fishermen on island are having a hard time catching tuna and other fish after two succeeding tropical cyclones went through the CNMI.

The supply of fresh fish is hard to find on the island right now as some fishermen are having a difficult time catching them.

With two tropical cyclones, Tropical Storm Chan-Hom and Typhoon Nangka, passing through the CNMI in two succeeding weekends, most fishermen on Saipan were not able to go fishing.

"Business is really affected. Especially to the hotel that we need to supply the fresh local fish, we cannot supply," Carlita Salinas, a fish vendor said.

Right now, tuna sashimi in restaurants that only use fresh ones are hard to come by.

According to a Kinpachi Restaurant employee, they have been out of tuna supply for quite some time now.

A Sharky's employee also said they are having a hard time procuring fresh fish as most fishermen who do catch some go straight to hotels.

High waves, rough seas, and strong winds were just too much for some boats to handle.

"By this time the fishermen can only launch in Smiling Cove. Those are the small boats, the 17-footers. The 19-footers, they tried to launch at Sugar Dock, but when the big waves came, the boat was brought to the sand," Salinas said.

"It's very risky for the fishermen, especially now we don't have communication," he added.

Although a few were still able to catch some fish, Salinas said these are very small in size and are mostly tuna.

Reef fishes such as parrot fish and tataga are more difficult to catch.

"They cannot go diving because of the current," Salinas said. "The water is murky, the current is very strong."

According to fisherman Wence Aquino, two days before a typhoon, it is already hard for fishermen to sail. After a typhoon comes, it takes longer for the currents to calm down.

"It takes a few days before it goes back to normal," Aquino said.

Salinas said they are hoping that the weather will get better so that they can have a better catch.

"All of us are praying that the weather will be okay," she said.

NORTHERN MARIANAS COLLEGE
Procurement & Property Management Office
P.O. Box 501250 CK, Saipan, MP 96950 U.S.A.
Tel: (670) 234-5498 ext. 6822/23/24 • Fax: (670) 235-7601
E-mail: procurement@nmcnet.edu • Website: www.nmcnet.edu

INVITATION FOR BIDS

NMC IFB 15-004
ROOF REPLACEMENT, BUILDING J, NMC AS TERLAJE, SAIPAN CAMPUS

Northern Marianas College is soliciting sealed bid for the Roof Replacement of Building J at the Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje, Saipan Campus.

Specifications and Scope of Work packages may be picked up at the NMC Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, As Terlaje Campus, Saipan, commencing Tuesday, June 30, 2015 between the hours of 8: 30-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-4:00 p.m.

A mandatory pre-bid meeting and site inspection for interested person, firms and corporation will be held on July 14, 2015 at 10:00am, NMC Procurement Management Office, Bldg. L, 2nd floor, conference room.

Bid Packages are due no later than 10:00 a.m., July 31, 2015, at Northern Marianas College, As Terlaje Campus, Procurement Office, Bldg. L, 2nd Floor, Saipan, MP 96950. For Bidders located outside of the CNMI: you may request a copy of the IFB via fax (670) 235-7601 or email to Anita Camacho (anita.camacho@marianas.edu).

This procurement is 100% Federally Funded by the United States Department of the Interior, Office of Insular Affairs.

In accordance with Public Laws 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, Local Preference is not available to local businesses for this procurement.

This solicitation does not constitute an offer and does not obligate the College in any way. NMC reserves the right to reject any and/or all bids for any reason and waive any defect in said bids, or cancel in part or its entirety this IFB, if it deems, in its sole discretion, it is in the best interest of the College. All costs incurred by the proposer to prepare a response to this solicitation and subsequent inquiries shall be borne by the proposer. All submittals shall become the property of NMC.

Approved by:

/s/Anita Camacho
NMC Procurement Manager

/s/ David J. Attao
Dean of Administration Resource Development

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500/1 Fax: (670) 234-5962
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AMENDED NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

Pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section 11, the Commonwealth Ports Authority hereby gives notice that a Special Meeting of the Board of Directors will be held on Wednesday, July 15, 2015, at 10:00 a.m. in the CPA Conference Room, Second Floor of the Captain George Fleming Building, at the Port of Saipan. The following items are on the agenda for the above-referenced meeting:

AGENDA

I. PRELIMINARY MATTERS
   1. Call to Order
   2. Roll Call
   3. Adoption of Agenda
   4. Adoption of Minutes (May 7, 2015)
II. SPECIAL AGENDA ITEMS
   1. GPPC (North Seaplane Ramp) – Option to Renew
   2. Saipan Stevedore Company Inc. – Option to Renew
   3. Huang Shun Corporation
   4. Saipan Industrial Gas Inc. (SIGI) – Request for Assignment
   5. Supplemental Budget Request
      a. Saipan ARFF Roof Leak Repairs
      b. Rota/Tinian Seaport Feasibility Study Cost Share
   6. SIA ARFF Building Roof Repairs Award
   7. TIA Sewer System Construction Management Services Award
   8. SIA Grounds Maintenance Appeal
   9. Amendment to Board Bylaws
III. PUBLIC COMMENT
IV. EXECUTIVE SESSION
V. ADJOURNMENT

All interested persons are welcome to attend and to submit written or oral testimony on the above agenda items.

/s/ JOSE R. LIFOIFOI
Chairman, Board of Directors

July 13, 2015

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation
3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building
P.O. Box 501220 CK • Saipan, MP 96950-1220
Telephone: (670) 664-4282 • Facsimile: (670) 235-5131

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to the Open Government Act (1 CMC § 9901 *et seq*), the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation ("CUC") **Board of Directors' Personnel Committee** hereby informs the general public that the Personnel Committee will meet on **Thursday, July 16, 2015, at 9:30 a.m.** at the CUC Conference Room, Room 17, 3rd Floor, Joeten Dandan Building.

The Agenda is as follows:

I. Call to Order
II. Roll Call
III. Adoption of Agenda
IV. Adoption of Minutes
   1. June 26, 2015 Meeting
   2. July 10, 2015 Meeting
V. Public Comments
VI. Apprenticeship Program
VII. Executive Session*
   A. Personnel Matters
VIII. Adjournment

** Public comments are limited to 30 minutes and each remark is limited to three minutes. Everyone is welcome to submit written comments.*
** Pursuant to 1 CMC § 9912, the Board of Directors may vote to meet in executive session at any time.*

Tourists fall prey to bag snatchers in Susupe beach

A witness' call to the police led to the arrest of two men who allegedly grabbed two bags that two Japanese tourists had placed on the table of a pavilion at Susupe Beach Park on Friday.

Felix Reyes Agulto Jr., also known as Jun, 45, and Jeremiah Jerry Pangareon Seman, 31, were both arrested for theft.

Police detective Jesus K. Wabol said that Agulto and Seman both confessed to stealing the bags and even guided the officers to the location where they threw them.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph N. Camacho imposed yesterday a $2,000 cash bail for each defendant. Preliminary hearing will be on July 20 at 9am.

Assistant public defender Michael Sato was appointed as counsel for Agulto. A private counsel will be appointed for Seman. Assistant attorney general Barbara Cepeda appeared for the government at the hearing.

Wabol stated in his report that patrol police officers were dispatched on Friday at 5:59pm to a theft in progress at Susupe Beach Park.

One officer caught two men who matched the description of the suspects along Totcha Avenue near Mobil Gas Station in Susupe. Police later identified the two as Agulto and Seman.

A witness identified Agulto and Seman as the persons who grabbed the tourists' bags.

The witness said he saw Agulto and Seman sneaking around Susupe Beach Park by the children's playground.

Seman then allegedly walked to the pavilion, grabbed a bag, and ran to Agulto in the beach area. The two proceeded to the grassy area near Saipan Community School, where they opened the stolen bag.

The two went back to the playground and hid behind the restroom. At this juncture, the witness called the police.

The suspects were then seen running toward Beach Road.

Wabol said Agulto admitted to police that it was Seman who first grabbed the bag but then threw it to the beach side behind Saipan Community School because there were no valuables inside.

Agulto said he grabbed the other bag and threw it later by a house where the police caught them.

Wabol said Seman also admitted to police his participation in the crimes.

The two led police to where they threw the bags.

The tourists later identified the bags as their property that they had placed on the pavilion's table.

One bag contained undergarments and cut up materials, while the other contained two camera lenses and two film cartridges, police said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

Cultural groups still being sought for International Festival of Cultures

By JAYSON CAMACHO
jayson_camacho@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Marianas Visitors Authority is still seeking representative groups of different cultures to participate in the planning for the 2nd Annual International Festival of Cultures.

MVA is kicking its preparations for the event into high gear with the tourism body's newest signature event set to be held for six consecutive Saturday evenings on Saipan beginning on Aug. 22.

The festival will be held Aug. 22 and 29 and Sept. 5, 12, 19, and 26 at Paseo de Marianas in Garapan. It intends to celebrate the cultural diversity of the Northern Mariana Islands, with special emphasis on the indigenous cultures of Micronesia.

So far there are a total of 11 groups that will be represented in the International Festival of Cultures: the CNMI, Marshall Islands, Korea, Japan, China, Hawaii; Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa as one group; Tahiti, Marquesas, and Cook Island as another group; the Philippines, Bangladesh, and Palau.

"It was a big success last year and we have already been in meetings for preparation and still looking for more cultural groups. The goal of the International Festival of Cultures is to showcase the unique and diverse cultures of the CNMI for both visitors and the local community alike," MVA community projects manager Martin Duenas said.

The 2015 edition of the International Festival of Cultures will be held at the Paseo de Marianas and cultural groups have the option to showcase food, arts and crafts, demonstrations on making their cultural items, and performances.

The festival will include food sales beginning at 5pm and live cultural entertainment from 6pm to 11pm. Admission is free.

Representative groups may contact MVA community projects specialist Ryan Calvo at rcalvo@mymarianas.com or 664-3210 for more information.

3 more host families sought for homestay program

By JAYSON CAMACHO
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REPORTER

The Saipan Mayor's Office is looking for three more host families for students coming from Japan this July 28.

Saipan Mayor's Office executive assistant Yuki Kishimoto said they will be conducting outdoor activities for the Kokusai Seishonen Kenshu Kyokai group during their visit to Saipan.

"We already have two host families but we need three more—two for the students and one for the chaperone," Kishimoto said.

Tokyo's International Youth Association of Japan KSKK will deploy nine students—six boys and three girls—escorted by a chaperone.

KSKK's website shows that 90 percent of their students traveling overseas for homestay programs are either first-time travelers or can hardly speak English.

The KSKK was founded in 1973 and has contributed to the promotion of friendly exchanges between countries.

KSKK will host a trip for CNMI students interested in homestaying in Japan from Nov. 12 to 17, and KSKK students will arrive once again for homestay on Saipan on Dec. 24 to 30.

There will be other schools from Japan visiting the CNMI and will also need homestay accommodations.

Sanpoen students will be here on Aug. 5 to 11. Kishimoto said there will be 20 students—six boys and 14 girls. The age group for the students will be from 11 to 18.

"They will only need host families on the weekends. During the weekdays they will be staying at a hotel," she said.

ECC English School students will arrive on Aug. 17 and will stay until 21 and Johoku High School will be on Saipan from Oct. 27 to 30 and will also need host families.

For more details, interested families can pick up homestay applications at the Saipan Mayor's Office at the Ladera Center on Beach Road or call Kishimoto at 234-6208, 234-6280, and 235-7304.

PACIFICA WINNER

Pacifica Insurance Underwriters Inc.'s Hashtag Choose My Picture winning photo entry No. 11 is from instagrammer Rachel Abrams as @rdlka_ with caption "My baby girl." Winner will be entitled to a free pizza. Pacifica welcomes anyone from the CNMI to tag an infinite amount of photos and videos through Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter the following in order to be eligible: #choosemypicture or #choosemyvideo; #pacificainsurance and #restassured. For further details log on to www.pacificains.com/choosemypicture.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Senate temporarily halts budget hearings

The Senate has temporarily halted the budget hearings for some of the "big ticket" departments of the Commonwealth.

Due to the recent typhoon and ongoing communications outage, there has been no update yet on the postponed hearings.

Early last week, members of the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs were only able to conduct a hearing for the Department of Public Safety.

The scheduled hearings for the Department of Finance, Department of Public Safety, CNMI Medical Referral Program, and Department of Public Works last week were postponed and no new date has been set.

Finance Secretary Larissa Larson said she was supposed to attend the budget hearing last week, but the hearing was reset for another date.

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. is expected to have a budget hearing on July 15 at 9:30am, while the Public School System is scheduled on July 14 at 9:30am.

Department of Fire and Emergency Services chief Clyde Norita also said he has yet to receive word as to when his department needs to attend the hearing.

Earlier, Sen. Jude Hofschneider (R-Tinian), chairman of the Senate Committee on Fiscal Affairs, said the budget hearings are meant for senators to ask more questions of CNMI departments.

The Senate may not come up with a version of a draft government budget before the House version is adopted, he said.

Hofschneider clarified that the Senate committee he heads will start with the bigger departments.

Thursday House session

The House version of the budget has been adopted by the House Committee on Ways and Means but is yet to be presented to whole body.

A House session is scheduled on Thursday to discuss the committee-adopted budget, according to a staff from the Office of the House Speaker.

The House version of the budget adopted by the Ways and Means Committee was pegged at $149.5 million.

This "budget bill" for fiscal year 2016 is slightly higher than the government's earlier proposal of $145.8 million. ***(Joel Pinaroc)***

CUC: TM Corp's claim for compensation unwarranted

By DENNIS B. CHAN
dennis_chan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Previous Commonwealth Utilities Corp. executive directors and legal counsels have found unwarranted a construction firm's ongoing claim of $904,619 for past projects, acting CUC executive director John Riegel told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

The construction firm, TM Corp., spoke to the board last week through former senator Pete Reyes.

TM Corp. believes it has a $904,619 claim on a sewer extension project in Chinatown that dates back more than a decade ago to 2001. TM Corp. says because of this lack of payment, the company has since closed down as majority of its assets were tied to this project.

When sought for an update on the issue, Riegel said CUC counsel has invited the firm to look and make copies of CUC files as CUC has deferred the claim to the Office of the Attorney General.

Riegel said previous executive directors and legal counsels have already given an opinion about the claim, which TM Corp. has brought to CUC's attention in past years.

"The opinion was that there is no additional compensation warranted," Riegel said.

The claim, according to Riegel, is an "additional compensation" for "stand-by time" and work the firm had to excavate hard rock from their construction site.

Riegel said the firm needed special rock-breaking equipment to dig through the soil.

"…If the assertion is that they haven't been paid for work done, that's not true," Riegel said. "They were paid a million dollars or so for completed work."

He said CUC counsels have found "no justification for additional compensation," per the terms of contract, but "[TM Corp.] is of a different opinion," Riegel said.

Last Wednesday, Reyes brought to the CUC board's attention an Open Government Act request that was past its 10-day deadline.

"We heard it was being forwarded to the AG's Office…So we wanted to make sure we had all the documents referenced to the issue only that affected the claim," Reyes said.

"The reason for that is we wanted to make sure we had the same record so we can review that, and make sure that if we were going to bring this further for legal remedy, then we have all these requirements with us so we are not going to be facing any surprises," he said.

According to Reyes, a June 16 letter invoking the OGA was not acknowledged until last Wednesday. Reyes said he was later informed that CUC counsel James Sirok was off-island and did not receive a copy of the letter. Reyes said they sent a follow up OGA letter on July 1.

Last month, the CUC board voted to defer TM Corp.'s $904,619 claim to the Attorney General's Office, explaining that the original contract was with the local government and not the utility.

‘Everyone needs to laugh more’

»A Chamorro comedian’s journey to stardom

By THOMAS MANGLONA II
CORRESPONDENT

It is said that people fear public speaking more than death. As a former high school orator, debater, Youth Congress senator, mock trial attorney, Attorney General’s Cup champion, and KSPN intern news anchor, Mona Concepcion may be considered an exception to the old adage.

The Saipan lass works for the University of Washington’s marketing department during the day and is a comedian at night. Living in her Seattle home with her husband and two children, Concepcion considers the art of comic storytelling to be a large part of the fabric of Chamorro society.

Concepcion started telling her own stories in high school on her blog, kirida.com, where she continues to post stories about her life on the islands and journey in the mainland as the world’s sole female Chamorro comedian.

“Comedy is my fun night job. I get to have something to do in the day and at night I get to go on stage,” the 2001 Marianas Baptist Academy salutatorian told *Saipan Tribune*.

Since her 2011 debut as a comedian with a three-minute performance at a Seattle open-mic, Concepcion has been on several stages in the West Coast.

Concepcion has entertained audiences in Seattle, Los Angeles, San Diego, and Portland, bringing an infectious enthusiasm and hilarious rhetoric to every room she walks into.

“I have always been a performer. In the Chamorro culture we always tell jokes. That’s the way we communicate,” she said. “I think it is very natural for conversations to move into a funny story. Even if it has been told 17 times it is still funny when you hear it. That’s what I grew up with.”

After years of practice and performing in venues like professional comedy clubs, biker bars, coffee shops and even marijuana dispensaries, Concepcion has evolved into a reputable stand-up comic.

“Comedy is like a muscle,” she explained. “The more you practice and exercise the muscle, the stronger and better you become.”

After countless nights on stage, Concepcion says she is a more confident comedian.

“I don’t feel like I’m a veteran but I feel more ready. As I go through and write my material, I feel more confident about my presentation and stage presence.”

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
The world’s sole professional female Chamorro comedian, Mona Concepcion.

Concepcion was on the local stage in the infancy of her career in 2012, where she performed for a standing-room-only audience at Naked Fish to benefit the CNMI Autism Society.

Concepcion’s comical talent was more evident in two sold-out performances at Naked Fish recently, which she described as “an incredible time” in her life.

Embracing the Chamorro way of life

Concepcion is known for her signature jokes rooted in the island lifestyle.

“I talk about my experiences as someone who is from this small place in the Pacific and lives in a big city and the things I observe about island culture and stateside culture,” she said. “ I talk a lot about my mom and I love talking about Saipan because it anchors me back to a place where I am so far away from. It is now a part of my active life. I can joke about it and I hope the audience remembers where Saipan is or is interested enough to ask where it is.”

She added, “The thing about Chamorro culture is that it is very unique. I grew up in an environment which is so different to the comedians in the states.”

Concepcion spreads the island culture by using Chamorro words in her stories. “I feel people can relate to that even if they don’t know what it means,” she added. “A lot of my jokes are based on island living.”

Concepcion speaks of experiences with her mother while on stage as well. “ She is very Chamorro and very Catholic. Jokes like that call to mind the Chamorro women you think of, the *man’amko*. Even if they don’t know what that is or the nuances the audience would relate that to someone being quirky…”

Concepcion’s mother unknowingly had a role in her daughter’s journey in comedy. As a 10-year-old, Concepcion recounted how her mother would laugh at comics on the television network Comedy Central.

“They were the first people to make my mom laugh,” she said. “She was so happy while listening to their jokes. They made me laugh too.”

Concepcion attended South Seattle College, where she was the student government president and editor-in-chief of the school’s paper. In 2006, she matriculated at the University of Washington and graduated with a B.A in English.

She urges other young educated female islanders to start getting involved in storytelling and comedy.

“Chamorros are so used to seeing singers and dancers and musicians; comedians are something special,” she said.

Young Chamorro women, she added, have so much to offer and “a powerful voice” that they should explore.

Concepcion considers comedy just as important as any other art form. “It’s a gift in itself,” she said. “It’s important to make people laugh. It’s important to have a place where we can laugh at ourselves. Life would be so serious if nobody had a joke in their pocket.”

COMMONWEALTH CASINO COMMISSION
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
P.O. Box 500237, Saipan, MP 96950
Email: commonwealthcasinocommission@gmail.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Opening Date: July 9, 2015 Closing Date: July 20, 2015

The Commonwealth Casino Commission (“Commission”) announces the following Job Vacancies for immediate recruitment:

	POSITION	DIVISION	SALARY RANGE	ANNOUNCEMENT NO.
1.	SYSTEMS ADMINISTRATOR	Administration	$33,000 - $38,000	CCC-2015-A
2.	EXECUTIVE SECRETARY	Administration	$25,000 - $30,000	CCC-2015-B
3.	MANAGER – Division Head	Administration	$40,000 - $45,000	CCC-2015-C
4.	ACCOUNTANT IV	Administration - Admin Services	$30,000 - $35,000	CCC-2015-D
5.	HUMAN RESOURCE OFFICER	Administration - Admin Services	$25,000 - $30,000	CCC-2015-E
6.	ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER	Administration - Admin Services	$17,000 - $22,000	CCC-2015-F
7.	INSPECTOR II (2 positions)	Administration – Permit & Licensing	$27,000 - $32,000	CCC-2015-G
8.	INSPECTOR I (2 positions)	Administration – Permit & Licensing	$25,000 - $30,000	CCC-2015-H
9.	ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT (2 positions)	Administration–Permit & Licensing	$15,000 - $18,000	CCC-2015-I
10.	MANAGER – Division Head	Enforcement & Investigations	$40,000 - $45,000	CCC-2015-J
11.	INVESTIGATOR–Senior Level (2 positions)	Enforcement & Investigations	$30,000 - $35,000	CCC-2015-K
12.	ENFORCEMENT OFFICER II (3 positions)	Enforcement & Surveillance	$27,000 - $32,000	CCC-2015-L
13.	ENFORCEMENT OFFICER I (3 positions)	Enforcement & Surveillance	$23,000 - $28,000	CCC-2015-M
14.	MANAGER – Division Head	Audit & Compliance	$60,000 - $65,000	CCC-2015-N
15.	AUDITOR – Financial Audit	Audit & Compliance	$39,000 - $44,000	CCC-2015-O
16.	AUDITOR – Technology Audit	Audit & Compliance	$39,000 - $44,000	CCC-2015-P
17.	FINANCIAL ANALYST	Audit & Compliance	$37,000 - $42,000	CCC-2015-Q

- Salary: Actual salary level will depend on the applicant’s education, experience, and other related qualifications.
- Location: Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (“CNMI”).
- Benefits: Basic CNMI government employment fringe benefits.
- Exempted Positions: These positions are exempted from the CNMI Civil Service system per P.L. 18-56.

Requirements: A. CNMI Government Application for Employment (OPM-03)
B. Resume with accompanying educational and professional credentials & documentations
C. Police Clearance (recent)
D. Copy of your Driver’s License or other form of Valid Identification

Education and training claimed under items 24 (A) through (H) of the Application for Employment must be substantiated by an official school transcript, diploma, or certificate. Failure to provide the required documents will result in automatic disqualification.

The Commonwealth Casino Commission is an equal employment opportunity employer. The CCC’s EEO policy is to ensure that all employment decisions are made on a non-discriminatory basis, and without regard to sex, race, color, age, national origin, religion, disability, marital status, sexual orientation, political affiliation or belief, or any other status protected by applicable national, federal, state or local law. Please be informed that prior to a job offer, you are required to undergo a pre-employment drug test pursuant to the Alcohol and Drug Free Workplace Policy, Part V.C. of the Personnel Service System Rules and Regulations. The Casino Commission may also require additional criminal background checks and investigations on some positions.

Application Forms can be picked up at the Office of Personnel Management (OPM). For information on the POSITION DESCRIPTIONS and Requirements, please contact Ms. Ruth Ann Sakisat at 233-1857 or at commonwealthcasinocommission@gmail.com. Interested persons should submit their Employment Application Forms along with supporting documents to the Commonwealth Casino Commission Office, Springs Plaza, Gualo Rai, Saipan, MP 96950.

POI Aviation is inviting qualified individuals to apply for the following positions:

Accounting Manager (1)
College degree with financial management major and 3 years of progressive financial management experience. Minimum of 3 years experience in directing the monthly closing of books, preparation of financial reports, financial forecast / budgets, doing financial analysis and implementing cash management activities. Excellent communication and strong interpersonal skills to manage people. Proficient in the use of SAP R3 Financial and Controlling (FICO) system, Peachtree and Microsoft Office software. Airline industry experience preferred. CPA license is desirable but not required. Must be able to work under time pressure and can work flexible hours.

Accountant (1)
Must be a college graduate with a Bachelor’s degree in Accounting; Minimum 2 years experience in accounting; Airline industry experience preferred. Proficient with the use of SAP R3 FICO system, Peachtree and Microsoft Office software. Must be able to work under time pressure and can work flexible hours.

Senior Account Manager (1)
Bachelor’s degree preferred. 5-8 years of relevant job experience in the airline ground handling service industry. Knowledge/Skill Requirement. Project supervision and management. Able and willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Excellent oral and written communication skills preferably in English and Korean, or Chinese languages. Must be able to work under time pressure.

Technical Operations Supervisor (1)
Diploma from technical/vocational course in automatic/diesel engines. Four (4) years experience as a GSE Mechanic. Two (2) years in leadership role within a maintenance organization. Extensive knowledge on Pneumatic and Hydraulic System maintenance. Extensive knowledge on specialized and motorized Equipment Electrical and Electronic maintenance. Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays. Must have a valid CNMI driver's license. Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position.

Terminal Operations Supervisor (1)
Associate's degree in related field; Five (5) years equivalent work experience; Specific airline certification as load planner; Sufficient mathematical skills to perform manual weight and balance calculations. Thorough knowledge in all areas of ramp, cargo and flight operations; Knowledgeable in FAA, ICAO, IATA, TSA, local airport and airline regulations; Excellent written and oral communication skills; Conflict resolution and decision-making with the ability to lead is required. Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays; Must have a valid CNMI driver's license; Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position.

Ground Support Equipment Mechanic (3)
Graduate of technical/vocational course on automotive and diesel engines; Minimum 2 years experience in repair and overhaul of gas and diesel engines; Skilled in local parts fabrication; Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays; Must have a valid CNMI driver's license; Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position

Lead Customer Service Agent (Cargo) (1)
Associate's Degree in related field or comparable work experience preferred. Three (3) years equivalent work experience. Knowledge in all areas of cargo operations; Knowledgeable in FAA, ICAO, IATA, TSA, local airport and airline regulations; Conflict resolution and decision-making with the ability to lead is required; Excellent written and oral communication skills; Computer literate with good typing skills; Must be able to operate forklift and other cargo-handling equipment. Must be able to lift 70 pounds. Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays. Must have a valid CNMI driver's license. Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position

Lead Customer Service Agent (Ramp) (3)
Associate's Degree in related field or comparable work experience preferred. Three (3) years equivalent work experience. Knowledge in all areas of ramp operations; Knowledgeable in FAA, ICAO, IATA, TSA, local airport and airline regulations; Conflict resolution and decision-making with the ability to lead is required; Excellent written and oral communication skills; Computer literate with good typing skills; Must be able to lift 70 pounds. Can operate different specialized equipment for aircraft servicing and for ramp operations. Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays. Must have a valid CNMI driver's license. Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position

Lead Airport Service Agent (Passenger) (2)
Associate's Degree in related field or comparable work experience preferred. Three (3) years equivalent work experience. Knowledgeable in FAA, ICAO, IATA, TSA, local airport and airline regulations; Conflict resolution and decision- making with the ability to lead is required; Excellent written and oral communication skills; Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays. Must have a valid CNMI driver's license and a reliable means of transportation; Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position

Lead Airport Service Agent (Aircraft) (1)
Associate's Degree in related field or comparable work experience preferred. Three (3) years equivalent work experience. Knowledgeable in FAA, ICAO, IATA, TSA, local airport and airline regulations; Conflict resolution and decision- making with the ability to lead is required; Excellent written and oral communication skills; Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays. Must have a valid CNMI driver's license and a reliable means of transportation; Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position.

Airport Service Agent (Aircraft) - Part Time (6)
Must have at least 6 months related experience. Must be able to routinely move equipment and/or items up to 70 pounds and work well under time pressure. Must be able to regularly ascend/descend stairs to service airplanes. Must be able to stand, lift, bend, push and pull for extended time. Must be willing to work outside in all types of weather and elevated noise levels within the airport environment. Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays; Must have a reliable means of transportation; Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position.

Load Planning Specialist – Part Time (1)
Associate's degree; * Minimum 2 years experience in functions such as preparing aircraft loading plans, loading and offloading aircraft, operating equipment and ensuring security of cargo in flight; Previous airline and airport operations experience preferred. Strong mathematical skills-ability to formulate and evaluate correct load balance. Strong communication skills-ability to effectively and concisely communicate with station personnel. Strong decision making skills-ability to plan, implement and manage situation. Multitasking-ability to handle multiple high-stress tasks simultaneously. Ability to work for a 24/7 airline operations; days, nights, weekends and holidays. Must have a reliable means of transportation; Reliable, punctual attendance is an essential function of the position.

Lead Aircraft Maintenance Technician (1)
Heads shift or work project, as directed by the manager, performing various repairs on aircraft airframe and power plants and other required services to ensure airworthiness. AS Degree in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering and/or Aeronautical Engineering. Preferably with two years experience on Airframe and Power Plant maintenance; Have work experience on both narrow and wide-body aircraft. Must be skilled in use of specialized aircraft testing equipment and hold current U.S. FAA and A&P License or an equivalent foreign license. Has at least 2 years leadership experience in similar field of work. Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays. Must have a valid CNMI driver's license.

Aircraft Maintenance Technician (Full-Time (3) and Part-time (4))
Perform various repairs on aircraft airframe and power plants and other required services to aircraft to airworthy condition; AS Degree in Aircraft Maintenance Engineering and/or Aeronautical Engineering; Minimum 2 years experience on Airframe and Power Plant maintenance; Experience on narrow and wide body aircraft; Must possess either a current U.S. FAA A&P license, equivalent foreign license and experience; Must be flexible to work any shift in a 24/7 operation, including nights, weekends and holidays; Must have a valid CNMI driver's license.

Applications can be obtained at the POI Aviation Building, International Terminal LP, Saipan International Airport. Salaries will be commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than July 27, 2015. Background checks and pre-employment drug testing will be required prior to employment.

POI Aviation is an Equal Opportunity Employer
Qualified women, minorities and disabled persons are encouraged to apply.

Wary of climate change, Vanuatu villagers seek higher ground

TAKARA, Vanuatu (AP)—Many people living in this coastal village in Vanuatu believe the March cyclone that sent waves surging through their homes was the latest and most dramatic sign of climate change. They are now considering rebuilding their entire community on higher ground.

Cyclone Pam struck the Pacific archipelago three months ago, blasting the islands with winds of 270 kilometers (168 miles) per hour, killing at least 11 people and affecting 180,000 more by destroying their homes and crops. Many residents saw it as part of broader environmental changes they've witnessed in recent years, from higher sea levels to trees bearing fruit out of season.

"We have seen a lot of changes in our weather patterns. The level of the sea rise. And it is affecting the nation at the moment," said Vanuatu President Baldwin Lonsdale in an interview with The Associated Press. "The impact of climate change is quite real in Vanuatu."

Parts of Vanuatu are low-lying and are starting to see visible signs of rising sea levels as the earth warms and ice caps melt. The world's oceans have risen nearly 7 centimeters (nearly 3 inches) since 1992, scientists at the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration say, and are projected to rise at a faster rate in the decades to come.

AP
In this Tuesday, June 2, 2015, photo, a woman weaves a mat in a village on Tanna Island in Vanuatu.

More damaging than the overall rise, however, are the unpredictable surges brought on by more severe storms. While scientists caution that singular events like the cyclone can't be attributed solely to climate change, many say there is a link to a general increase in violent weather.

"The short answer would be that certainly there is a connection between climate change and extreme weather," said Debarati Guha-Sapir, a professor at the University of Louvain School of Public Health in Brussels. "The numbers of storms and high wind events have been increasing. So have droughts, in fact, and all of these are very connected to climate change."

She said there's likely to be an increase in catastrophic flooding in coming years and people need to better prepare for that.

Vanuatu isn't the only Pacific island nation figuring out how to face climate change. Low-lying Kiribati has purchased land in Fiji, which Kiribati President Anote Tong says is an investment and also a guarantee in case the entire nation needs to move.

In Takara, which is on Vanuatu's main island of Efate, village chief Benjamin Tamata said he wants to move the village of about 200 people inland by about 300 meters (1,000 feet) to move away from the rising seas and to avoid future storm surges.

"When the cyclone came to my village, it's not only the cyclone," he said. "With the sea level rising, it came through and damaged our houses. And some of the people run away."

He said many escaped to a nearby school, but now it's time to plan for the long term.

"We try to relocate," he said. "To take all the people from this village and we try to relocate where we can be safe, or where we can survive from the sea."

If Takara does move inland, it won't be the first village to do so in Vanuatu. A decade ago, dozens of villagers on Tegua Island moved inland in what the U.N. described as one of the first cases of mass displacement triggered by global warming.

"Staff from the meteorological office and hazard department, they went and assessed the level of sea rise," said Lonsdale. "And they advised people to move inland. And so they assisted. They assisted the communities and we have moved them further up from the coastal area."

NOAA, NASA, the Japanese weather agency, and the World Meteorological Organization all declared 2014 the hottest year on record, with NOAA putting 2014 at an average of 58.26 degrees Fahrenheit (14.6 Celsius).

As the world gets warmer, water expands, so the seas rise. But on top of that, ice sheets in Greenland and west Antarctica are melting, as are world glaciers, and scientists worry that meltwater will dramatically increase sea level by about 1 meter by the end of the century.

Islanders are also noticing other effects of climate change, said Shadrack Welegtabit, the director of Vanuatu's National Disaster Management Office. He said trees are bearing fruit and nuts all year round, instead of in distinct seasons like in the past.

"Not only in Vanuatu, but probably in the Pacific as a whole, climate change does have an impact," Welegtabit said. "We are beginning to see changes in the weather patterns. We are beginning to have more intense weather, more severe cyclones."

Vanuatu has made strides in its rebuilding efforts since the cyclone, and many tourism operators are hoping that the tourists who help power the economy will soon return. But for others, like Vila North School Principal Elina Jaywelson Gilu, the rebuild has been painfully slow.

She's still operating three classes from a tent provided by aid agency UNICEF while she waits for her classroom buildings to get new roofs.

"You can just imagine our classes are very noisy, and it's really, really hard to get the students to concentrate," she said. "Because they are all under one roof and it's not been partitioned to separate the classes. And they are all sitting on the floor."

Shirley Laban, the climate change adaptation manager in Vanuatu for aid agency Oxfam, said its time for the world to get serious about tackling climate change.

"What more can we show you. Category-5 Cyclone Pam is the real evidence already," she said. "We need to cut down on this carbon emission. Because as long as we do not cut down, vulnerable individuals, countries, women and children will continue to be impacted."

Medical team provides mental health service to FSM

PACIFIC OCEAN—For many Micronesians, anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns are culturally taboo subjects, laden with shame, stigma, and concealment. The people who suffer from these mental illnesses often suffer quietly.

The behavioral health team of Pacific Partnership 2015, consisting of a neuropsychologist and a behavioral health technician have been working closely with host nation providers in both Chuuk and Pohnpei to break this silence.

"In Micronesia, there is a traditional belief among members of the community that mental illness is due to bad magic or in some cases spiritual possession," said Army Cpt. Lonnie Bradford, a psychologist attached to the Military Sealift Command joint high speed vessel USNS *Millinocket*. "Mental illness not only reflects poorly on the individual, but also brings shame on their family lineage."

Through mutual cooperation with providers, the Behavioral Health and Wellness Program of Chuuk State was able to partner with other health booths to disseminate, raise awareness, and provide mental health interventions to the rural and central areas of Weno.

"This was the first time their mental health providers were able to partner with other medical fields like dentistry, optometry, and other medical specialties in the community," said Bradford. "Our presences there not only increased the visibility of mental health in FSM, but also legitimized the message that mental health care is a priority every bit as essential as other medical services."

Issues included substance abuse prevention targeting alcohol and tobacco in youth and post-typhoon emotional recovery. Chuuk state was recently affected by Typhoon Maysak causing widespread damage and destruction of homes.

"That is why partnering with Dr. Sylvia Wally [FSM's only psychiatrist] to do community outreach engagements was such a vital step forward in debunking myths, educating the populace about mental health issues, and promoting the use of mental health services in a culturally sensitive way."

In Pohnpei, the Behavioral Health team has worked side by side at the local mental health clinic as well as the prison where some of the most distressed patients are held. Moreover, the team recently completed workshops for non-mental health care providers in an effort to help fill the mental health service gap in FSM.

"The trainings were very well received," said Bradford. "We were able to pass on a lot of knowledge to help treat mental illness and address substance abuse problems. We even had the opportunity to work with school teachers to help them identify alternative strategies outside of physical punishment to manage disruptive classroom behavior."

The team is confident that the work completed here will enhance the visibility and standing of mental health services in the Federated States of Micronesia. They look forward to ongoing collaborations and exchanges as the mission continues throughout the south pacific.

Now in its 10th iteration, Pacific Partnership is the largest annual multilateral humanitarian assistance and disaster relief preparedness mission conducted in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. While training for crisis conditions, Pacific Partnership missions to date have provided medical care to approximately 270,000 patients and veterinary services to more than 38,000 animals. Additionally, the mission has provided critical infrastructure development to host nations through the completion of more than 180 engineering projects.

Additional information on the Pacific Partnership mission is available on the U.S. Pacific fleet Pacific Partnership website at www.cpf.navy.mil/pacific-partnership/2015/. ***(Pacific Partnership Public Affairs)***

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Statewide Independent Living Council meeting rescheduled

The Statewide Independent Living Council's Third General Membership Meeting scheduled for July 9, from 1pm to 3pm, at the Rota Bay View Hotel has been rescheduled for July 23, 2015, same time and place. Agenda remains unchanged. For more information, contact the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, P.O. Box 501521, Saipan, MP 96950; Navy Hill, Buildings N2 & N4; voice: 322-6537/8; TTY: 322-6449; fax: 322-6536; email: nmidir@ovrgov.net; website: www.ovrgov.net. ***(SILC)***

Military training at Warning Area 517, FDM

ASAN, Guam—The U.S. Navy and U.S. Coast Guard will conduct training at Warning Area 517 on July 13-15 from 8am to 6:30pm.

The U.S. Marines and U.S. Air Force will conduct training at the island of Farallon de Medinilla on July 14-17 from 10:30am to 8:30pm.

The general public—especially fishermen, commercial pilots, and marine tour operators—are advised to stay clear from the areas during the dates and times indicated.

W-517 is activated south of latitude 12° 40' 00»N. All vessels are advised to remain clear of W-517 south of latitude 12° 40' 00"N. Santa Rosa Reef and Galvez Bank are open for public use.

W-517 is an irregular shaped polygon comprising 14,000 nautical square miles of airspace that begins south of Guam and extends south-southwest in international waters.

The general location of the training on the island of Farallon de Medinilla will be on a 10-nautical mile radius on all quadrants. ***(JRM)***

2nd Annual International Festival of Cultures set

The 2nd Annual International Festival of Cultures will be held Aug. 22 and 29 and Sept. 5, 12, 19, and 26 at Paseo de Marianas in Garapan and will celebrate the cultural diversity of the Northern Mariana Islands, with special emphasis on the indigenous cultures of Micronesia. Cultural groups are encouraged to contact Marianas Visitors Authority Community Projects Specialist Ryan Calvo at rcalvo@mymarianas.com or 664-3210 to participate. ***(PR)***

Survivors, caregivers support meeting this Thursday

All people facing cancer, their family members, and caregivers are invited to the next Commonwealth Cancer Association monthly support meeting scheduled for Thursday, July 16, 5:30pm at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room. The guest speaker will be Ronald Sablan, Medical Referral director, Office of the Governor and the topic is "Medical Referral Program Update." To RSVP or for more information, call CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com or cca@ccamarianas.org. ***(PR)***

Farmers report damage to crops due to Nangka, Chan-Hom

By FRAULEINE S. VILLANUEVA
frauleine_villanueva@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Department of Land and Natural Resources began assessing the damage to the islands' crops yesterday after the CNMI was hit with two tropical cyclones in two succeeding weekends.

According to DLNR Division of Agriculture director Manuel Tenorio, they will go around and assess the damage caused by Tropical Storm Chan-Hom and Typhoon Nangka on local crops.

» DLNR to assess damage to crops

Saipan and Northern Islands Agricultural Fair Association president and Northern Marianas College Cooperative Research, Extension and Education's Michael Ogo said he had heard reports of crop damage from some farmers due to the typhoon.

"There were reports of damage by farmers like their bananas and other crops, you know, eggplants and all those vegetables," Ogo said.

He expects 20 to 30 percent damage because of the typhoon that moved very close to Saipan.

One farmer who experienced damage to his corn crops was Crispin Guerrero.

"Corn is very fragile. The amount of wind and rain—they knocked out my corn," Guerrero said.

Guerrero said the first time his corn was knocked down, he tried to bring them back up but they got knocked out again when another typhoon hit.

"I tried but it's not the same, it won't be the same," Guerrero said when asked if he'll try to revive the damaged corns a third time.

Isidoro Cabrera, who has a hydroponic farm, also suffered some damage. He said he assessed a loss of 25 percent as his lettuces were damaged because of Nangka's strong winds.

Cabrera said some of his banana trees were also toppled.

DLNR Secretary Richard Seman is also concerned about the effects of excess water on the crops.

"The typhoon was not as bad as other typhoons but the water, the excess of water, is probably the one that impacts them the most," Seman said.

"Right now they are at a stage where they are transitioning the harvest and the new planting so that might have been a good timing for this weather," he added.

Nine complete History Research Workshop

Last Friday, eight local residents and one visiting graduate student successfully completed a 40-hour history research workshop sponsored by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

The workshop, held at the CNMI Archives, Northern Marianas College, was facilitated by University of Guam history professor Dr. Michael Clement Jr.

During the course of the workshop, Clement helped participants identify historically significant topics, develop research proposals, navigate the local archives, and conduct oral history. He also introduced participants to the technical aspects of writing a research paper.

On the final day of the workshop, participants presented their papers and received feedback from Clement and from their peers. Papers covered a variety of topics ranging from ancient times to events of the post-World War II era.

Clement said he was very pleased with the results of the workshop. "We had some amazing presentations. I was impressed with the diversity of projects and the tremendous amount of work participants put into their research."

Several of the papers will be presented at the upcoming 3rd Marianas History Conference to be held on Saipan on Sept. 4-6.

This is the second history research workshop sponsored by the Humanities Council. The first was held in 2013 under the direction of University of Guam professor Dr. Anne Hattori.

These workshops are a part of the council's efforts to increase local participation in history and historical research.

The council invites the public to learn more about local history at the upcoming 3rd Marianas History Conference in September. ***(NMI Humanities Council)***

COUNCIL PHOTO
Workshop participants pose for a group shot. Front row, from left: Lynnette F. Tenorio, Jane Mack, Maria N. Takai, Eloise Lopez, and Jose H. Salas. Back row, from left: Zaji Zajradhara, Steven Connor, John Fraser, Dominique Burki, and Dr. Michael Clement Jr.

THEIR TIME TO SHINE
FERDIE DE LA TORRE
Acting governor Ralph DLG. Torres, center, joins Chief Justice Alexandro C. Castro and judges for a group photo with probation and parole officers during Friday's proclamation signing for Probation, Parole and Community Supervision Officers' Week at the CNMI Supreme Court.

Cape Air resumes Guam-Saipan-Rota service

GUAM—United Express/Cape Air announced yesterday the resumption of its Guam, Saipan, and Rota service on Sunday evening, July 12, 2015.

Regularly scheduled Cape Air flights between Guam, Saipan, and Rota had been cancelled due to the interruption in communication services between Guam and the CNMI. Subject to the restoration of communications service, Cape Air is planning to resume all scheduled flights effective yesterday, July 13, 2015.

On Sunday, July 12, 2015, Flight UA5077 was scheduled to depart from Guam International Airport at 7:15pm and arrive at Saipan International Airport at 8:05pm. Additionally, Flight UA5078 was scheduled to depart from Saipan International Airport at 8:35pm and arrive at Guam International Airport at 9:25pm.

United continues to urge customers to check the latest status of their flights operated by Cape Air at united.com or by calling United Reservations at 1-800-UNITED-1 (1-800-864-8331).

About United

United Airlines and United Express operate an average of nearly 5,000 flights a day to 373 airports across six continents. In 2014, United and United Express operated nearly two million flights carrying 138 million customers. For more information, visit united.com, follow @United on Twitter or connect on Facebook. The common stock of United's parent, United Continental Holdings, Inc., is traded on the NYSE under the symbol UAL. ***(United)***

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

Greece, a disaster in the making

The Greek government on Tuesday managed, yet again, to disappoint the ministers of the eurozone. Nearly everything Greece does disappoints those leaders, but this time—oh, perhaps "disappoint" is too mild a word.

Greek officials were scheduled to present an alternative plan for paying down the nation's massive debt, since voters overwhelmingly rejected the austerity plan demanded by the European Union.

But when Alexis Tsipras, Greece's prime minister, met Tuesday in Brussels with his 18 eurozone counterparts, he had nothing. He promised to have a proposal Wednesday. Imagine the collective eye-rolling in the room.

If history is any teacher, the details of the Greek plan won't matter much. The European ministers are almost certain not to like it, insisting that it does not go nearly far enough.

The ministers hold the upper hand right now. Greek banks are closed and about to run out of money unless there is further cash liquidity from the European Central Bank or, perhaps, Santa Claus. Then, next week, Greece has to pay salaries and pensions, and in two weeks it must redeem a $3.9 billion bond, which it cannot do on its own.

Tsipras' calling of last Sunday's referendum was a play for political leverage to demonstrate to the other nations—and possibly even himself—that he has a mandate from the Greek people. Point taken, but taxpayers in other European nations are getting grumpy about continuing to fund Greece's excesses. If those representatives listen to their own people, they might not blink in the face of Greece's posturing.

What will that mean to the rest of the world?

The most obvious possibility is for Greece to leave or be ejected from the European Union. The danger in that has always been that other debtor nations such as Spain, Italy, Portugal and Ireland—which received 2011 bailouts—might follow. That could bring down the entire confederation.

That is less likely today because most of Greek debt is held by the European Central Bank and the International Monetary Fund rather than by individual European banks, as in the 2011 bailouts. Also, while the bailouts haven't improved Greece's situation greatly, the economies in those other nations have seen improvement.

The greatest danger, particularly to Americans, is that it creates uncertainty and makes conditions right for stampedes. That means investors and the world's markets should buckle up and expect to see some substantial volatility in the next few months.

Unless, of course, Tsipras presents a workable plan on Wednesday.

OK, never mind, seat belt it is.

(c)2015 San Jose Mercury News (San Jose, Calif.)

SO-WHAT DID YOU LEARN IN SCHOOL TODAY?
MEANWHILE, IN TEXAS...
WELL- MOSES WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDING FATHERS...
THE CIVIL WAR HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH SLAVERY... AND-
DEEP-FRIED CUPCAKES ARE GOOD FOR YOU!
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Who's Alexander the Great?

By LUKE SLATTERY
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Alexander the Great was the first global celebrity: a hero, a superman and, so he believed, a god. Not only did he rule most of the known world at the time of his death in 323 BC, he also became a model of paranoid absolutism for all the Caesars and Kaisers and czars to come.

Millenniums later two nations—Greece and the neighboring Republic of Macedonia—are locked in a heated dispute over his inheritance.

The temperature fell a few degrees in late June when Greek Foreign Minister Nikos Kotzias and his Macedonian counterpart Nikola Poposki forged an entente in the interests of "trust building." But it has merely dropped from a boil to a simmer.

Alexander was born in Pella, capital of Macedon. Given his birthplace, Macedonians claim Alexander as a founding father. Greece, which has its own northern province of Macedonia, argues that the "M-word" in its Balkan neighbor's name amounts to a form of identity theft or cultural kleptomania. The modern republic is a successor state of the former Yugoslavia and, according to the Greeks, has nothing to do with the ancient kingdom.

The Greek case, as explained to me by a Greek government official, is this: "Aristotle taught Alexander the Great, and they were both Greek. They would shiver in their graves today at the idea that (Slavs) who migrated to the vicinity of their region seven centuries after them, belonging to a completely different civilization, would try to change history in order to give allure to their own culture."

It is indeed unlikely that Alexander the Great set foot in the territory of today's Republic of Macedonia. And yet he has become, by sheer force of assertion, the country's mascot.

In early spring this year I visited Skopje, the capital, landing at the conspicuously named Alexander the Great International Airport. In the arrivals hall, I encountered the first of many equestrian statues of Alexander, before driving into town on the (no prizes for guessing) Alexander the Great Highway.

In the pedestrian center, Alexander, rendered once again on his favorite steed Bucephalus, rears up on an imitation Roman victory column surrounded by Macedonian infantry with their distinctive long pikes, or sarissas.

Farther along the thoroughfare, Alexander's father, Philip II, stands on his own soaring column with fist raised in a power salute. There is even a bizarre nativity scene in which a young Alexander is suckled at the breast of his mother, Olympias, as well as a sculptural tableau of mother, father and world-conquering son.

The Greeks, not surprisingly, are nettled by this thrusting historical symbolism. But their position is not nearly as sound as it may seem; it is in fact a little odd to claim Alexander was exclusively Greek.

Certainly both Alexander's birthplace, Pella, and Vergina, the site of Philip's tomb, lie within the borders of modern Greece. Ancient Macedon, however, extended in Alexander's time far beyond those borders to encompass part of today's Republic of Macedonia, an even larger area of the Balkans and, ultimately, most of western Asia.

Alexander was thoroughly schooled, thanks in part to Aristotle, in the Greek mytho-poetic tradition, and it is said that he slept with a copy of Homer's "Iliad" beneath his pillow. Yet he seems to have spoken an indigenous oral Macedonian language, which produced no literature, as well as Greek.

Herodotus, writing in the 5th century BC, was convinced "that these Macedonians ... are Hellenes as they themselves say." But his phrasing suggests a lively debate, perhaps even a controversy, into which he was pitching. Indeed, ancient sources distinguish time and time again between Greek and Macedonian soldiers.

And as the Oxford classicist Robin Lane Fox explains in his book on Alexander: "The Macedonian kings had long claimed to be of Greek descent, but the Greeks had seldom been convinced by these northerners' insistence and only to flatterers was Philip anything better than a foreign outsider."

The classical Greeks could not bring themselves to agree that Macedonians were Hellenes. Why, then, do present-day Greeks assert with the obduracy of unmovable conviction that Alexander was Greek?

The one thing that seems to go unquestioned in this international quarrel is the real worth of Alexander's legacy.

Alexander the Great certainly had ambition, style and a superb military mind, but in essence he was a butcher who, toward the end of his life, lost his grip on reality. He murdered his comrade, the general Cleitus, at a dinner party, then knelt down and cried.

More egregious still, Alexander introduced a pernicious idea into the Western bloodstream: that of the "god king." Convinced that he was the son of Zeus, Alexander asked to be worshipped as a deity. In so doing he broke with a centuries-long Greek insistence on the separation between mortals and immortals.

The question of whether he was Greek or quasi-Greek can be endlessly debated. What is certain is that he trashed a good Greek idea.

Luke Slattery is a writer and journalist and honorary associate of the University of Sydney's department of classics and ancient history. He wrote this for the Los Angeles Times.

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They're off and running

By LEE H. HAMILTON
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Lee Hamilton is Director of the Center on Congress at Indiana University; Distinguished Scholar, IU School of Global and International Studies; and Professor of Practice, IU School of Public and Environmental Affairs. He was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for 34 years.

The presidential election is 16 months away, but already we're smack in the middle of the usual media scrum of campaign coverage, prognostication, and strategizing by many of us who have nothing much to do with the real campaigns. I've been following the rhetoric of both parties, and there are a few points that stand out enough to tell us something about what we have to look forward to.

To begin, the country is not in a sunny mood. The website Real Clear Politics keeps a running average of various polls, and its average of questions asking what Americans think of the country's direction shows some 62 percent believe we're headed in the wrong direction. That's not an all-time high—the figure was up in the 80s in the weeks before the 2008 election, and stood at 76.5 percent in October of 2011—but it suggests that the electorate is in a wary mood. There is a sense that America is adrift, that we don't quite know how to deal with the forces of globalization, technological change, economic uncertainty, or terrorism. Americans are looking for a leader who can restore confidence.

The economy in particular weighs on ordinary Americans' minds. There's widespread agreement that the growing economy has done very little to help people of ordinary income—not just in recent years, but really for the past generation. Americans may feel better about the economy now than they did a few years ago, but that hasn't lessened their long-term anxiety that it's harder than ever to get ahead, and certainly harder than it was in their parents' generation.

Still, the improving economy may be responsible for one interesting aspect of the campaign: Republicans thus far have made national security a centerpiece issue—perhaps responding to polling that shows that Republican voters consider it a key factor in deciding among the plethora of GOP candidates. This emphasis could change with world events, but right now candidates are pressing the argument that President Obama is not tough enough when it comes to foreign policy; they don't think highly of his leadership in the world, and in particular want to see more of a military buildup. It's a little less clear what they want to do with that military power.

Of course, national security and terrorism aren't the only issues that figure prominently in the Republicans' array of issues. So do the budget deficit, cutting taxes, and, as always, pulling back on the reach of government. They want to eliminate Obamacare as well as to cut Medicaid, move Medicare to a voucher system, repeal the estate tax, cut domestic programs, roll back financial reform and efforts to limit greenhouse gas emissions, and eliminate further consumer protections.

For the Democrats, meanwhile, addressing income inequality, maintaining social security and other entitlements, improving the country's decaying infrastructure, job creation, college costs, immigration and energy reform, and climate change all loom large. They want to preserve Obamacare, move forward on climate change, retain taxes on high-income earners, and preserve the financial reforms of the last decade.

The stark differences in priorities between Republicans and Democrats will probably be exacerbated by the primaries. Despite agreement on the general sense of unease among the population at large, just reciting the parties' rhetorical positions suggests there will be a huge gulf between the parties, with no agreement on how to bridge it. The campaign will be characterized by heavy emphasis on the impact of money on the process, and by record-breaking spending by the candidates.

So with no incumbent president, a large number of candidates, no clear favorite, and major differences in outlook on which issues to address and how to address them, this will be in the grand American political tradition a lively, contentious, long, expensive, maybe even pivotal election. Who gets to answer the biggest questions we face—the appropriate U.S. role in the world, what the reach and purpose of government should be, which path will best secure Americans' prosperity and world peace—is up for grabs. We've got an interesting election ahead as a nation. I'm looking forward to it. I hope you are, too.

Rethink treatment of Greece

The photo is shocking. A 77-year-old Greek retiree sits sobbing on the ground outside a bank with his passbook and identity card thrown on the ground. He had queued for hours at four failing banks but was unable to withdraw his pension of $178.

Not surprisingly, the photo of Giorgos Chatzifotiadis went viral. But the image illustrates much more than the suffering of ordinary Greeks.

This pensioner's despair symbolizes the limits of a decades-old effort to meld European nations into one community based on shared democratic values. The long-term hope was to create a political superpower—the United States of Europe. A Greek exit from the euro would mark the end of this dream.

The danger of a Greek exit revolves less around its economic impact than it does on its potential political impact. Radical parties of Europe's far right and left have become strange bedfellows in promoting a Greek exit from the eurozone. Their common goal is to weaken the European Union and NATO.

If Greece leaves and descends into deeper chaos, this embittered country will be strategically placed—in southeastern Europe—to cause headaches. Although it will still be an EU and NATO member, its leftist government may see nothing to lose from seeking alliances elsewhere.

Already, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has cozied up to Vladimir Putin, who will have a potential ally inside NATO whom he can encourage to make mischief (although Putin has yet to offer any financial incentives). Tsipras could veto European sanctions on Moscow over Ukraine (which require a consensus of all 28 members).

"The lesson of the last 10, 15 years," says the Council on Foreign Relations' Sebastian Mallaby, "is that weak states can damage the stability of stable, prosperous states. And if it's a weak state, which is not only geographically within Europe but also inside European institutions, it's not an inviting prospect."

This was not the way the European Union was supposed to turn out.

For decades following World War II, the European dream was to reject nationalism and focus on creating economic and trade ties. And it was highly successful. Enfolded in the European Economic Community, France and Germany became allies; Spain and Portugal, long ruled by authoritarian regimes, embraced democracy. After the Berlin Wall fell, ex-communist countries joined the fold and set up parliamentary systems.

The European Union was formally inaugurated in 1993, and 11 EU members adopted the common currency, or euro, in 1999, with Greece joining in 2001.

This was a reach too far.

The essential problem is that Greek (and Portuguese and Spanish) culture and history are very different from Germany's or Finland's. They put different values on rules, on thriftiness.

Example: In 2010, Greece collected about 10 percent of its potential tax take; the German government collected nearly 98 percent of taxes due. So putting disparate countries into one currency, with one set of fiscal rules (largely set by Germans), was a recipe for disaster.

When times were good, heedless French and German banks were happy to loan money to the Greeks, indifferent to the load of debt that Athens was amassing. And heedless Greek governments, banks and businesses kept borrowing.

When economic times turned bad, the level of Greek debt payments became unsustainable. Under pressure from Brussels, Athens tried uber-austerity; the Greek economy contracted by 25 percent and unemployment soared to 25 percent. It became clear that Greece could not "grow" its way out of debt or squeeze any more blood out of ordinary Greeks.

But instead of granting debt relief in 2010 (meaning irresponsible lenders would take a "haircut," along with Greek borrowers), the EU kept lending Greece more money, which went to pay off private French and German banks. This only increased Greek debt levels.

Instead of facing reality, the northern Europeans insisted that Greece do the impossible. The resultant tragedy has revealed the hollowness of Europe's political aspirations—and institutions. The euro was built on a mirage.

Pre-euro, if a country like Greece was in economic distress, it could devalue its currency, thus increasing its exports, and grow its way back to solvency. Locked into the euro, Greece has no such option.

If the EU were really the United States of Europe, it would have multiple mechanisms to transfer resources to a member state in a crisis. In the United States, for example, unemployment benefits help infuse cash into regions going through high unemployment. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. prevents banks from collapsing. And if a state or city declares bankruptcy, there are rules to work it out.

But EU member states have been unwilling to commit to such transfer mechanisms. The Greek crisis may prod EU members toward greater integration, but I doubt it. Globalization seems to be driving publics worldwide toward a heightened nationalism.

It is also still possible that EU officials will try to help, whether through debt reduction or by easing a Greek exit. At the moment, however, the burghers of northern Europe seem more eager to see the Greeks suffer in order to discourage other EU members from leaving the euro.

This is shortsighted. In or out of the euro, Greece's pain will fuel the narrative of radical European parties that are a threat to the future of a democratic Europe. If EU leaders want to save their political union, they should rethink their treatment of Greece.

By TRUDY RUBIN
The Philadelphia Inquirer

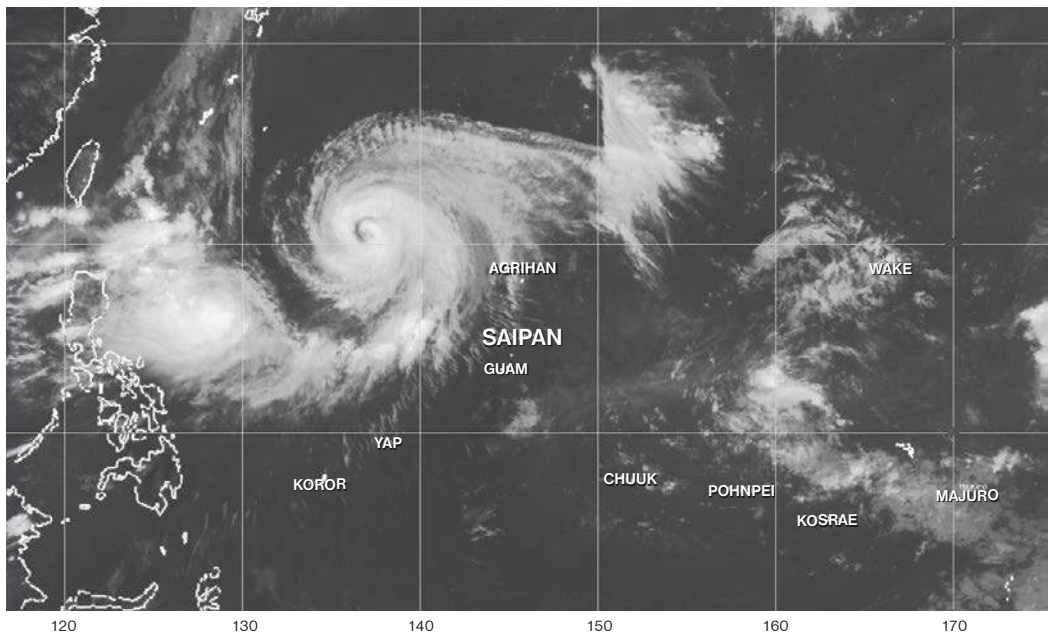
Trudy Rubin is a columnist and editorial-board member for the Philadelphia Inquirer. *Readers may write to her at:* Philadelphia Inquirer, *P.O. Box 8263, Philadelphia, Pa. 19101, or by email at trubin@phillynews.com.*

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Light and variable winds.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. Light and variable winds.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼77°	▲88° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼76°

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2015

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Typhoon Nangka (11W) is centered 675 miles northwest of Guam near 20N137E moving north at 6 mph with maximum sustained winds of 120 mph. Heavy rain and thunderstorms are within 150 miles of the center of Nangka otherwise scattered to numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms west of the Marianas and north of Yap are within 200 miles of a line from 22N140E to 20N143E to 16N142E to 14N135E to 15N130E. For more information on typhoon Nangka, see bulletins issued by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN33 PGTW and advisories issued by the National Weather Service under WMO header WTPQ33 PGUM. Tropical Storm Halola (01C) has just crossed the date line and is at 13N179E and moving northwest at 13 mph with maximum sustained winds Of 60 mph. Numerous showers and isolated thunderstorms northeast of Utirik atoll and southeast of Wake Island are east of 175E between 10N and 20N. For more information on Halola, see bulletins issued by the Joint Typhoon Warning Center under WMO header WTPN32 PGTW and advisories issued by the National Weather Service under WMO header WTPQ32 PGUM. A monsoon trough runs southeastward from east of Saipan at 15N148E through a weak circulation centered northeast of Pohnpei at 11N161E then northeastward into Tropical Storm Halola at 13N179E. Scattered showers and and a few thunderstorms southeast of Guam are within 50 miles of a line from 13N146E to 10N146E and across the Marshall Islands within 100 miles of a line from 8N166E to 5N173E. Patchy areas of scattered showers and a few thunderstorms north of Pohnpei are within 100 miles of a line from 13N156E to 9N164E and southwest of Wake Island between 15N and 20N from 157E to 164E. An upper-level low is triggering scattered showers and a few thunderstorms just west of Minami Tori Shima north of a line from 21N149E to 21N153E.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

Micronesia

Guam And Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Palau	Cloudy	▲87	▼79
Yap	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼78
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲84	▼78
Pohnpei	Partly Cloudy	▲86	▼77
Kosrae	Sunny	▲84	▼78
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼78

Around the Globe

Auckland	Windy	▲58	▼53
Beijing	Thundershowers	▲104	▼77
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲89	▼80
Honolulu	Showers	▲88	▼75
London	Showers	▲77	▼63
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	▲83	▼62
Manila	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼77
Melbourne	Showers	▲49	▼39
Miami	Thundershowers	▲92	▼78
New York	Thundershowers	▲80	▼74
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲91	▼75

Tides

Saipan Harbor

1:04 AM	Today	Low Tide:	1.2 Feet
6:14 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
1:46 PM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.3 Feet
8:48 PM	Today	High Tide:	1.8 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	5:55 AM	6:51 PM
Wednesday	5:55 AM	6:51 PM
Thursday	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Friday	5:56 AM	6:51 PM
Saturday	5:56 AM	6:51 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	4:04 AM	5:12 PM
Wednesday	4:58 AM	6:04 PM
Thursday	5:50 AM	6:52 PM
Friday	6:42 AM	7:38 PM
Saturday	7:33 AM	8:21 PM

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- *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JULY 2, 2015

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA5070	4:15am	5:05am	Daily
UA5068	8:00am	8:50am	3
UA5068	8:40am	9:30am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	2:20pm	4:00pm	6, 7 via Rota
UA5078	3:10pm	4:00pm	1, 5
UA5038	3:10pm	4:00pm	2, 4
UA5040	6:55pm	7:45pm	1, 5
UA5078	8:35pm	9:25pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5044	10:40pm	11:30pm	1, 5

SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP)

UA5039	2:20pm	2:55pm	6, 7

ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM)

UA5039	3:25pm	4:00pm	6, 7

SAIPAN-PALAU (ROR)

DL287	6:05am	1:05am+1	2, 6 via NRT

SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT)

DL287	6:05am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 6
DL297	4:30pm	7:15pm	Daily

SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ6063	2:25am	6:00am	3, 4, 6
OZ626	3:20am	7:00am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
7C3403	4:35am	8:20am	1, 2, 3, 6, 7
7C3403	5:25am	9:10am	4, 5
7C3401	3:15pm	7:35pm	3, 5, 6
7C3401	4:20pm	8:05pm	1, 2, 4, 7

SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS)

OZ608	3:10am	6:20am	4, 7

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG)

3U8648	6:10am	8:40am	1, 4, 5, 7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)

MU764	1:30am	5:30am	3, 5, 7

SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN)

3U8646	4:20am	7:30am	2, 6

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

OZ626/701	2:20am	11:05am	1 via ICN
OZ6063/701	2:25am	11:05am	3, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/701	3:20am	11:05am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/191	4:15am	8:55am	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5070/PR111	4:15am	9:20am	Daily via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	8:50pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5070/183	4:15am	9:10pm	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
DL287/275	6:05am	9:40pm	1, 2, 4, 5, 6 via NRT
UA5068/183	8:00am	9:10pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	8:50pm	2, 5 via GUM
UA5068/183	8:40am	9:10pm	1, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA5039/183	2:20pm	9:10pm	6, 7 via Rota-GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	8:50pm	2 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	8:50pm	5 via GUM
UA5078/183	3:10pm	9:10pm	1 via GUM
UA5038/183	3:10pm	9:10pm	4 via GUM

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)

OZ626	2:20am	6:00am	1
OZ6063	2:25am	6:00am	3, 4, 6
OZ626	3:20am	7:00am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
OZ626/721	2:20am	11:50am	1 via ICN
OZ6063/721	2:25am	11:50am	3, 4, 6 via ICN
OZ626/721	3:20am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN
UA5070/179	4:15am	9:55pm	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:00am	9:55pm	3 via GUM
UA5068/179	8:40am	9:55pm	1, 5, 6 via GUM
UA5039/179	2:20pm	9:55pm	6 via Rota-GUM
UA5078/179	3:10pm	9:55pm	1, 5 via GUM

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA5069	2:45am	3:35am	Daily
UA5071	6:40am	7:30am	3
UA5071	7:15am	8:05am	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7
UA5039	1:00pm	1:50pm	6, 7
UA5038	1:00pm	2:35pm	2, 4 via Rota
UA5077	1:50pm	2:40pm	1, 5
UA5041	5:35pm	6:25pm	1, 5
UA5077	7:15pm	8:05pm	2, 3, 4, 6, 7
UA5043	9:20pm	10:10pm	1, 5

GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP)

UA5038	1:00pm	1:35pm	2, 4

ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN

UA5038	2:05pm	2:40pm	2, 4

PALAU (ROR)-SAIPAN

DL298	4:30am	2:55pm	3, 7 via NRT

NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN

DL298	10:25am	2:55pm	Daily
DL288	8:55pm	1:25am+1	3, 4, 5, 7

SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN

7C3402	8:45am	2:15pm	3, 5, 6
7C3402	9:30am	3:20pm	1, 2, 4, 7
OZ625	7:40pm	1:10am+1	7
OZ6053	7:55pm	1:25am+1	2, 3, 5, 6
OZ625	8:20pm	1:50am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6
7C3404	10:10pm	3:40am+1	Daily

BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN

OZ607	9:05pm	1:55am+1	3, 6

SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN

3U8647	10:40pm	5:00am+1	3, 4, 6, 7

BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN

MU763	4:30pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6

GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN

3U8645	7:40pm	3:00am+1	1, 5

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

DL276/288	9:30am	1:25am+1	1, 3, 4, 5, 7 via NRT
UA190/5077	9:55am	8:05pm	2, 3, 6, 7 via GUM
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ702/6053	12:15pm	1:25am+1	2, 3, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ702/625	12:15pm	1:50am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
PR110/UA5071	10:05pm	7:30am+1	3 via GUM
PR110/UA5071	10:05pm	8:05am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	10:25pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM
UA184/5039	10:25pm	1:50pm+1	6 via GUM
UA184/5038	10:25pm	2:40pm+1	1, 3 via GUM-Rota
UA184/5077	10:25pm	2:40pm+1	4, 7 via GUM
UA184/5041	10:25pm	6:25pm+1	4, 7 via GUM
UA184/5077	10:25pm	8:05pm+1	1, 3, 6 via GUM
UA184/5043	10:25pm	10:10pm+1	4, 7 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:30pm	7:30am+1	2 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:30pm	8:05am+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5071	11:30pm	1:50pm+1	5 via GUM
UA184/5077	11:30pm	8:05pm+1	2, 5 via GUM

HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN

OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:10am+1	7 via ICN
OZ722/6053	1:10pm	1:25am+1	2, 3, 5, 6 via ICN
OZ722/625	1:10pm	1:50am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
UA180/5071	9:55pm	8:05am+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5039	9:55pm	1:50pm+1	5, 6 via GUM
UA180/5077	9:55pm	2:35pm+1	1, 3 via GUM-Rota
UA180/5077	9:55pm	8:05pm+1	1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; 7C: Jeju AirETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Mon, Tue,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily
8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily
9:30AM	9:45AM	Daily
10:30AM	10:45AM	Daily
11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily
12:30NN	12:45NN	Daily
1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily
2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily
3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily
4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily
5:30PM	5:45PM	Daily
6:30PM	6:45PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:00AM	7:15AM	Daily
8:00AM	8:15AM	Daily
9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily
10:00AM	10:15AM	Daily
11:00AM	11:15AM	Daily
12:00NN	12:15NN	Daily
1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily
2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily
3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily
4:00PM	4:15PM	Daily
5:00PM	5:15PM	Daily
6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily

SAIPAN TO ROTA

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
7:45AM	8:15AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:00PM	4:30PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

ROTA TO SAIPAN

DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat
4:45PM	5:15PM	Mon, Tues,Wed, Thu, Fri, Sat

Business

Eurozone, Greece reach agreement on bailout

BRUSSELS (AP)—A summit of eurozone leaders reached a tentative agreement with Greece on Monday for a bailout program that includes "serious reforms" and aid, removing an immediate threat that Greece could collapse financially and leave the euro.

Nine hours after a self-imposed deadline passed, the leaders announced the breakthrough early Monday.

If the talks had failed, Greece could have faced bankruptcy and a possible exit from the euro, the European single currency that the country has been a part of since 2002. No country has ever left the joint currency, which launched in 1999, and there is no mechanism in place for one to do so.

For three days of negotiations between Greece and its international creditors, Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras held out for a better deal to sell to his reluctant legislature in Athens this week, even though financial collapse is getting closer by the day.

AP

German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left, speaks with French President Francois Hollande, center, and Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras during a meeting of eurozone heads of state at the EU Council building in Brussels on Sunday, July 12, 2015.

A breakthrough came in a meeting between Tsipras, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, French President Francois Hollande and EU president Donald Tusk. Details were not immediately available.

The breakthrough came after the threat of expulsion from the euro put intense pressure on Tsipras to swallow politically unpalatable austerity measures because his people overwhelmingly want to stay in the eurozone.

Greece has requested a three-year, 53.5 billion-euro ($59.5 billion) financial package, but that number grew larger by the tens of billions as the negotiations dragged on and the leaders calculated how much Greece will need to stay solvent. The creditors are demanding tough austerity measures in exchange for Greece's third bailout in five years.

Early Monday, a Greek official said the key sticking points were the involvement of the International Monetary Fund in Greece's bailout program and a proposal that Greece set aside 50 billion euros ($56 billion) worth of state-owned assets in a fund for eventual privatization.

The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he wasn't authorized to discuss the negotiations, said any agreement would provide quick help for Greek banks from the European Central Bank. Without it, they risk running out of money this week.

The negotiations began Saturday with a meeting of finance ministers. The heads of state convened mid-afternoon Sunday and were still negotiating at dawn Monday.

The deal on the table appeared to include commitments from Tsipras to push a drastic austerity program including pension, market and privatization reforms through parliament by Wednesday, and from the 18 other eurozone leaders to start talks on a new bailout program.

Sunday's four-page discussion paper put to eurozone leaders and obtained by The Associated Press spoke of a potential "time-out from the euro area" for Greece if no agreement could be found.

China accuses trading firms of manipulating stocks

BEIJING (AP)—Chinese authorities have accused securities firms of manipulating share prices and allowing improper trading during the country's market plunge, in a possible effort to deflect blame for investor losses totaling several trillion dollars.

The accusations follow drastic official efforts to stop price declines that caused China's market benchmark to plummet 30 percent over the past month, wiping out $3.8 trillion in investor wealth.

Prices have rebounded slightly following measures including a pledge by state-owned brokerages and government pension funds to buy stocks and a ban on sales by executives and major shareholders.

Investigators have found "evidence to suspect that individual trading companies are illegally manipulating securities and futures exchanges," the police ministry said in a statement late Sunday. It said a criminal investigation was underway but gave no details of which firms were targeted.

The stock market boom began last year after the state press said shares were cheap, which led investors to believe Beijing would intervene to prop up prices if needed. The collapse came after changes in banking regulations made investors suspect Beijing might withdraw its support. Regulators also tightened controls on lending to finance trading.

Official media have blamed the market slide on short-selling, rumors and misconduct, possibly by foreign investors.

The ruling Communist Party wants to encourage more public stock investment and wants the markets to raise money for state companies to pay off debts and become more competitive.

The price collapse could frustrate those plans by making small investors who have suffered heavy losses reluctant to buy shares in the future.

Separately, the securities regulator accused unspecified companies late Sunday of violating market rules by allowing stock trading through accounts with fictitious names and other improper behavior. It ordered brokers to stop allowing access to outside companies that provide credit for trading, which might amplify market swings.

Securities companies allowed anonymous trading accounts "to the detriment of the legitimate rights and interests of investors, seriously disrupting the stock market order," said a China Securities Regulatory Commission statement.

"As the market has stabilized, these illegal phenomena appear to have momentum to make a comeback that might again jeopardize the smooth operation of the stock market."

Whataburger takes stand against Texas' new open carry law

SAN ANTONIO (AP)—An iconic Texas restaurant chain will not allow the open carrying of guns on its properties, and industry experts say other restaurants will likely take the same stand against a new state law legalizing the practice in many public places.

Whataburger—with some 780 locations in 10 states—has drawn a mix of praise and rebuke since making the announcement this month, including a prediction of boycotts from one of the state's leading advocates for gun rights.

In an open letter on the company's website, Whataburger president and CEO Preston Atkinson said many employees and customers are "uncomfortable being around someone with a visible firearm." He described himself as an avid hunter with a concealed-carry license and noted that patrons licensed to carry concealed handguns will still be able to do so in Whataburger.

Atkinson's letter comes one month after Texas Gov. Greg Abbott signed a bill that made it legal to carry handguns openly on the streets of the nation's second most-populous state, ending a prohibition dating back to the post-Civil War era that disarmed former Confederate soldiers and freed slaves.

The law, which gives private property owners the right to prohibit open carry, was hailed as a victory for gun rights advocates who have staged high-profile rallies at the Alamo and Texas Capitol over the past couple of years. Some even brought military-style assault rifles into businesses as part of their demonstrations, prompting the Chipotle restaurant chain to discourage firearms on their premises.

Whataburger's decision is expected to pave the way for other restaurants to enact similar policies that will further limit where gun owners can openly carry their firearms when the law takes effect in January.

Texas Restaurant Association CEO Richie Jackson said he wasn't surprised by Whataburger's advance announcement, noting that "gun rights do not trump property rights" under the new law.

"It can't be kept a secret," he said. "Given the number of units that they have in Texas, they just wanted to make it very clear as to where they were going to be, and I would expect to see a number of restaurants follow."

But Open Carry Texas founder C.J. Grisham said Whataburger's policy was "premature and irresponsible," and that the restaurant caved to "fear mongering."

"I think most gun owners that know this policy are simply not going to go to Whataburger, like me," he said.

California gas prices spike amid national downward trend

CAMARILLO, Calif. (AP)—While gas prices nationwide are on a downward trend, California is experiencing a spike that could see prices top $4 a gallon before easing again, according to analysts.

A shortage in oil and other components used in refining California's unique blend of less-polluting gas was one of the reasons for the price jump, industry analyst Trilby Lundberg said Sunday.

A slowdown in imported crude and a refinery shutdown in Torrance also caused wholesale prices to skyrocket, experts said.

The highest average price in the nation was $3.66 a gallon in Los Angeles as of Friday—a jump of 9 cents, according to Lundberg's bi-weekly survey. But prices rose another 13 cents in a special survey conducted Saturday, she said.

This resulted in wildly different prices even in the same areas. Two competing gas stations in the Woodland Hills neighborhood of Los Angeles, which normally charge about the same price, were 58 cents apart on Saturday afternoon, according to City News Service. A gallon cost $3.72 at one station, and $4.30 at the other.

Patrick DeHaan, a senior petroleum analyst at Gas Buddy, told the Los Angeles Times that California had become unattractive to foreign suppliers because prices had been dropping for months.

However the worst effects of the spike were already easing Sunday as foreign wholesalers moved quickly to bring their product into California, Lundberg said.

"Exports from outside the state in the U.S. and abroad did not have a great incentive to come in, but now they do," she said.

Nationwide, the average price of gasoline dropped 2 cents over the past two weeks to $2.83 a gallon. The average national price for midgrade gas was $3.05, with premium going for $3.22, according to the Lundberg survey.

The cheapest price recorded in the continental United States was $2.42 a gallon in Jackson, Mississippi.

Nation

Confederate flag down but what happens now

By JESSE J. HOLLAND
ASSOCIATED PRESS

AP
In this Friday, July 10, 2015, file photo, an honor guard from the South Carolina Highway patrol lowers the Confederate battle flag as it is removed from the Capitol grounds in Columbia, S.C.

Legions of people clapped, cheered and cried as South Carolina lowered the Confederate battle flag. But the euphoria of a moment that was more than a decade in the making quickly began to shift to a hard question to answer: What exactly had been accomplished for race relations in the United States? Was it more symbolic than substantive?

A flag is gone. But discrimination, poverty and inequality still exist around the country, with some wondering if the time and energy spent on the Confederate battle flag might have been better used tackling other racial issues facing Americans.

"It was easy to focus on the flag, as opposed to the issues that have divided blacks and whites historically," said Carol Swain, a law and political science professor at Vanderbilt University.

But a symbolic victory is still a victory, others argued, with this one meaning more than most—that the feelings of a minority population perpetually outvoted and not always considered in the South had finally been acknowledged. The abrupt shift in political willingness to take down the flag came just weeks after nine black people—including a revered minister and legislator—were shot to death during Bible study at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston; photos of the white man charged with their slayings showed him displaying the Confederate flag and authorities have described the slayings as a hate crime.

In the years before, it was viewed as political suicide to push to remove the flag from the statehouse grounds. Former Govs. David Beasley of South Carolina and Roy Barnes of Georgia were voted out of office over the issue. Beasley had proposed relocating the flag from the Statehouse to a monument. Barnes had introduced a new state flag to reduce the size of the Confederate battle symbol emblazoned on it.

Elsie Lee, a retired South Carolina state employee, thought about what her parents went through in the South as the Confederate flag, which has been adopted by segregationists and supremacists over the years, slowly came down from a flagpole in front of the state capitol.

"This is the most important thing happening in this country," said Lee, who lived through the civil rights struggles of the 1960s. "You just see everybody coming together. ... I wish that my parents were here to see this."

The ceremony on Friday when the flag was removed brought out a jubilant, hundreds-deep multiracial crowd. Some chanted "USA" and "hey, hey, hey, goodbye" as gray-dressed South Carolina troopers lowered the flag in a 6-minute ceremony. Jayme L. Bradford, 42, a journalism professor at Voorhees College in Denmark, South Carolina, watched it come down and said now that it's gone, race relations may get better.

"This moment has been a longtime coming," she said. "It always haunts me. It always reminds me that racism is alive and well."

Still, no one is naive enough to believe that taking down the Confederate flag from South Carolina's statehouse grounds will magically end racism or discrimination in South Carolina or the South, said Trent Brown, a Mississippi native and America Studies professor at Missouri University of Science and Technology. There are still discussions about policing and voting rights to be had, he said.

US soldiers opposed to war now find Canada less hospitable

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)—When Army Sgt. Patrick Hart decided a decade ago that he would not serve in the war in Iraq, he expected to follow the same path as thousands of American war resisters during the Vietnam era and take refuge across the border.

But after five years of wrangling with the Canadian immigration system, he came back to the U.S.—and ended up in a military prison.

The country that once welcomed war resisters has developed a much different reputation during the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan: Supporters say no U.S. soldier who has sought legal residence in Canada, either as a refugee or on humanitarian grounds, has been successful.

AP
In this Oct. 1, 2006 file photo, Army Sgt. Patrick Hart poses for a photo in Toronto. In 2006 Hart had deserted the Army and was living as a "war resister" in Canada.

"Nobody's won," said Hart, a Buffalo native who exhausted his legal options then turned himself in to the Army, was court-martialed for desertion and sentenced to two years in prison.

There are an estimated two dozen U.S. military members still waiting out their fate in Canada, and the resisters' movement is seen as nearing a crossroads. With a national election three months away, supporters are hopeful for a Liberal Party victory and more sympathetic stance toward American military exiles, but bracing for the possibility Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper wins re-election.

Liberal Party leader Justin Trudeau has not committed to letting the resisters stay, but many are buoyed by his family history. It was his father, Pierre Trudeau, who while prime minister during the Vietnam War said Canada should be "a refuge from militarism."

Dismay in US over Guzman's escape from Mexican prison

CHICAGO (AP)—Reactions in the United States to the escape from Mexican prison of a reputed drug lord ranged from disbelief to outrage, with some observers saying it dramatically illustrated the need for captured cartel kingpins to be promptly extradited to the U.S.

A former administrator of the Drug Enforcement Administration said he was dismayed by Joaquin "El Chapo" Guzman's weekend escape—apparently through a mile-long tunnel—from the Altiplano prison, 55 miles west of Mexico City.

"It is a shock that the most dangerous cartel leader in the world has escaped," Peter Bensinger said Sunday. "He ought to have been housed in an American prison."

Washington's official response was diplomatic, as Attorney General Loretta Lynch said in a statement Sunday that the U.S. shared "Mexico's concern regarding the escape" and stood by to help in the manhunt.

But one Mexico expert said American officials likely expressed more frustration behind the scenes.

"I think this will add to the distrust many U.S. agencies feel (toward the Mexican government)—even if that's not publicly voiced," said David Shirk, San Diego-based fellow for the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

At least some observers said they weren't surprised by Guzman's escape given Mexican prisons' reputation, including Gal Pissetzky, a defense attorney who has represented suspected drug traffickers in U.S. courts nationwide.

"I'm surprised he stayed locked up in there as long as he did," Pissetzky said.

The Chicago Crime Commission, an influential crime-fighting group in Illinois, said Sunday that the prison break meant Guzman will regain his title as Public Enemy No. 1 in Chicago, where his Sinaloa cartel has long dominated the cocaine and heroin trade.

When the group attached the Public Enemy label to Guzman a year before his capture, it was the first time it had been used since it was applied in 1930 to Prohibition-era gangster Al Capone. The Chicago Crime Commission planned to formally restore the title to Guzman this week, said John Pastuovic, a spokesman for the non-governmental body.

ACROSS THE NATION

Thousands rally to support Confederate flag in Florida city

OCALA, Fla. (AP)—Thousands of people have rallied in central Florida in support of flying the Confederate flag. Police estimated 2,000 vehicles, mostly motorcycles and trucks adorned with the Civil War-era flag, took part in Sunday's gathering in Ocala. The event was being held to back a decision by Marion County in that area of central Florida to return the Confederate flag to a display outside its government complex The Ocala Star-Banner reports participants wore shirts with phrases including "heritage not hate" and talked of defending Southern traditions. A replica of the General Lee car from "The Dukes of Hazard" TV show led the procession. One of the participants, Rick Hart, defended flying the Confederate flag, saying "It's a history thing. The flag is also a military flag. It's not a race symbol."

Police: Chicago-area officers hurt in attack; kill assailant

RIVER FOREST, Ill. (AP)—Authorities say a shotgun-wielding man opened fire on suburban Chicago police officers responding to a 911 house call about a woman who was having trouble breathing. River Forest Deputy Police Chief James O'Shea says the 24-year-old man "ambushed" the officers shortly after 7 a.m. Sunday and that they returned fire, killing him. He says two officers suffered injuries that weren't life-threatening. One was shot in his bullet-proof vest and the second was treated for other injuries. Authorities say a 60-year-old man was found dead in the home and the attacker's 59-year-old mother was found with gunshot wounds and taken to a hospital. Police say shootings inside the home were "domestic" and happened before they arrived.

The Cook County medical examiner's office confirmed the deaths but didn't provide further details.

54 stingrays die at Chicago-area zoo when oxygen level drops

CHICAGO (AP)—Officials say all 54 stingrays in a popular exhibit at a suburban Chicago zoo died because the oxygen levels in their tank dropped too low. The Chicago Zoological Society released a statement Saturday saying the four southern stingrays and 50 cow-nose rays in the Brookfield Zoo exhibit were in a shallow pool that allows visitors to touch and feed the creatures. Most died Friday afternoon. Bill Zeigler, a senior vice president at the society, says zoo staffers worked hard to try to save the rays and are devastated by their deaths. The society says the staff is working to get the tank's oxygen levels back to normal and that the seasonal exhibit will remain closed for the rest of the summer.

Asia

Malaysian police probe conspiracy to topple premier

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP)—Malaysian police said Monday they are investigating the leak of confidential documents that allegedly show millions of dollars were funneled to Prime Minister Najib Razak's account, an explosive disclosure that has shaken the ruling coalition in power since 1957 to the core.

National police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said the leak of the documents, allegedly from a Malaysian government investigation into state investment fund 1MDB, could constitute as "economic sabotage" against the country and be part of a conspiracy to topple Najib.

Police "have not eliminated the possibility of a conspiracy to subvert Malaysia's democratic process and topple the prime minister," Khalid said in a statement.

Najib has not disputed the existence of the accounts or the receipt of the funds. He has only said that he has never used government funds for personal gains, and called the allegations a political sabotage. Najib has also rejected repeated calls by the opposition and civil society groups to go on leave while the investigation is going on.

AP

This file photo of May 25, 2015, shows Malaysian National Police Chief Khalid Abu Bakar speaking at press conference in Wang Kelian, Malaysia.

Many senior members of his United Malays National Organization party have backed him, at least publicly.

Khalid said all members of the taskforce investigating 1MDB, including central bank personnel, will be questioned to identify who leaked the documents and whether the documents are genuine or have been doctored.

The country's attorney general confirmed earlier this month that he had received documents from investigators that linked Najib and 1MDB.

The existence of the documents, which allegedly show $700 million was wired from entities linked to 1MDB into Najib's accounts, were first reported by The Wall Street Journal. The newspaper said five deposits were made into Najib's accounts and that the two largest transactions, worth $620 million and $61 million occurred in March 2013 ahead of a general election.

The documents sent to the attorney general pave the way for possible criminal charges, and have embroiled Najib in the biggest crisis of his political career.

If charged, Najib would be the first Malaysian prime minister to face a criminal prosecution.

His ruling National Front coalition has been in power since independence from Britain in 1957. However, support for the coalition has eroded in the last two general elections. In 2013, it won the polls but lost the popular vote for the first time.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Typhoon weakens into storm as it approaches Koreas

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—A typhoon that battered the Chinese coast has weakened into a tropical storm as it pushes toward the Korean Peninsula, where some South Korean flights were canceled due to strong winds and rain. Tropical Storm Chan-hom is packing winds of up to 52 miles (85 kilometers) per hour. According to the U.S. military's Joint Typhoon Warning Center, it is centered over the Yellow Sea about 185 miles (297 kilometer) southwest of Seoul and is forecast to move across the Demilitarized Zone separating North and South Korea late Sunday or early Monday. It is then expected to dissipate over North Korea. No casualties have been reported from heavy rains that pounded areas south of Shanghai in China on Saturday. Some 1.1 million were evacuated as a precaution.

Beijing city govt to move part of its functions to a suburb

BEIJING (AP)—Beijing's city government said Sunday that it is going to move part of its administrative functions out of the city center as part of a plan to better integrate the Chinese capital with its surrounding areas. The municipal government's Communist Party committee also agreed at a meeting Friday and Saturday to stick to its target to limit Beijing's population to 23 million, according to the government's information office microblog. Its population was 21.5 million at the end of 2014. The "subsidiary administrative center" will be in Tongzhou, a district in Beijing's eastern suburbs about a 40-minute car ride from downtown Beijing without heavy traffic, and will take shape by 2017.

Seoul: North Korea media confirms purging of defense chief

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea has officially confirmed the purging of its defense chief two months after Seoul's spy service said he had been executed for disloyalty to leader Kim Jong Un, a South Korean official said Monday. South Korea's National Intelligence Service told lawmakers in May that People's Armed Forces Minister Hyon Yong Chol was killed by anti-aircraft gunfire for talking back to Kim, complaining about his policies and sleeping during a meeting. The North's state media has since not mentioned Hyon or his disappearance. But over the weekend, the country's official Korean Central News Agency named army general Pak Yong Sik as the armed forces minister in a dispatch about a meeting with a Lao military delegation. South Korean Unification Ministry spokesman Jeong Joon-Hee told reporters Monday that this confirmed Hyon's replacement and purging.

Myanmar opposition to run in November polls despite doubts

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (AP)—The Myanmar opposition party led by Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi announced Saturday it will contest the general election on Nov. 8 despite misgivings about transparency, in an effort to challenge the ruling military-backed party.

"We will contest the election to continue implementing the democratic transition that has yet to be achieved," Suu Kyi told reporters in the capital, Naypyitaw.

Suu Kyi is still unable to run for president after lawmakers recently turned down efforts to amend the constitution. Her party boycotted the 2010 polls because it considered election rules to be unfair. It took part in by-elections in 2012 after changes were made, winning almost all seats it contested—which nonetheless represented a small bloc in Parliament.

AP

Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, center, talks to journalists during a news conference at her residence, Saturday, July 11, 2015, in Naypyitaw, Myanmar.

Myanmar was under army rule from 1962 until 2011, when the military-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party took power. President Thein Sein, a senior leader in the former military government, introduced surprising reforms, especially in the economy, but their pace has slowed, and the military still is the ultimate power-holder.

Asked if the elections will be free and fair, Suu Kyi replied: "Not completely."

She said the main concern is the voter list, which she said contains "many, many errors. ... It means that the voter concerned will not be allowed to cast his or her vote on the day of the election and this is a grave concern for us."

Her party has repeatedly said the election cannot be free or fair if the constitution is not amended.

The constitution was enacted during military rule, and gives the army a dominant say in the administration of the country. One clause mandates that 25 percent of the seats in Parliament must be held by the military, ensuring it has veto power over constitutional amendments. Another clause has the effect of barring Suu Kyi from presidency.

China: Uighurs deported from Thailand wanted to join jihad

BEIJING (AP)—China's government has alleged that more than 100 minority Muslim Uighurs who were sent back by Thailand after fleeing China were on their way to fight in the Middle East and that some were implicated in terrorist activities at home.

Thailand has been harshly criticized by the U.N., the European Union and human rights groups for repatriating the 109 Uighurs back to China, where activists say they face persecution, instead of sending them to Turkey, which has accepted other Uighurs.

The Uighurs (pronounced WEE-gurs), a Turkic-speaking Muslim minority in China's far western region of Xinjiang, have complained of harsh cultural and religious suppression as well as economic marginalization under Chinese rule. Beijing has accused Uighur separatists of terrorism in Xinjiang, where ethnic violence has left hundreds of people dead.

China's official Xinhua News Agency, citing the Ministry of Public Security, said late Saturday that the 109 "illegal immigrants" had been on their way "to join jihad" in Turkey, Syria or Iraq, and that 13 of them had fled China after being implicated in terrorist activities. Another two had escaped detention, according to Xinhua.

The report also claimed that a Chinese police investigation had uncovered several gangs recruiting people for jihad, and that Turkish diplomats in some Southeast Asian countries had facilitated the illegal movement of people.

The Uighurs were detained in Thailand more than a year ago, but claimed to be Turkish. A group of 173 were sent to Turkey after Thai authorities said they determined they were indeed Turkish, but the 109 were found to be Chinese, according to Thai deputy government spokesman Maj. Gen. Verachon Sukhonthapatipak.

World

‘El Chapo’ Guzman escapes; manhunt begins

MEXICO CITY (AP)—Mexico mounted an all-out manhunt Sunday for its most powerful drug lord, Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman, who escaped from a maximum security prison through a 1.5-kilometer (1 mile) tunnel from a small opening in the shower area of his cell, according to the country’s top security official.

The elaborate underground escape route, built allegedly without the detection of authorities, allowed Guzman to do what Mexican officials promised would never happen after his re-capture last year—slip out of one of the country’s most secure penitentiaries for the second time.

“This represents without a doubt an affront to the Mexican state,” said President Enrique Pena Nieto, speaking during a previously scheduled trip to France. “But I also have confidence in the institutions of the Mexican state ... that they have the strength and determination to recapture this criminal.”

If Guzman is not caught immediately, the drug lord will likely be back in full command and control of the Sinaloa Cartel in 48 hours, said Michael S. Vigil, a retired U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration chief of international operations.

AP

In this Feb. 22, 2014 file photo, Joaquin “El Chapo” Guzman is escorted to a helicopter in handcuffs by Mexican navy marines at a navy hanger in Mexico City.

“We may never find him again,” he said. “All the accolades that Mexico has received in their counterdrug efforts will be erased by this one event.”

Thirty employees from various part of the Altiplano prison, 55 miles (90 kilometers) west of Mexico City, have been taken in for questioning, according to the federal Attorney General’s Office.

A manhunt began immediately late Saturday for Guzman, whose cartel is believed to control most of the major crossing points for drugs at the U.S. border with Mexico.

Guatemala’s Interior Ministry said a special task force of police and soldiers were watching Mexico’s southern border for any sign of fugitive drug lord.

To the north, U.S. Attorney General Loretta Lynch issued a statement offering “any assistance that may help support his swift recapture,”

Associated Press journalists near Altiplano saw the roads were being heavily patrolled by federal police, with numerous checkpoints and a Blackhawk helicopter flying overhead. Flights were also suspended at Toluca’s international airport near the penitentiary in the State of Mexico, and civil aviation hangars were being searched.

Guzman was last seen about 9 p.m. in the shower area of his cell, according to a statement from the National Security Commission. After a time, he was lost by the prison’s security camera surveillance network. Upon checking his cell, authorities found it empty and a 20-by-20-inch (50-by-50 centimeter) hole near the shower.

Guzman’s escape is a major embarrassment to the Pena Nieto administration, which had received plaudits for its aggressive approach to top drug lords. Since the government took office in late 2012, Mexican authorities have nabbed or killed six of them, including Guzman.

Guzman faces multiple federal drug trafficking indictments in the U.S. as well as Mexico, and was on the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration’s most-wanted list.

After Guzman was arrested on Feb. 22, 2014, the U.S. said it would file an extradition request, though it’s not clear if that happened.

The Mexican government at the time vehemently denied the need to extradite Guzman, even as many expressed fears he would escape as he did in 2001 while serving a 20-year sentence in the country’s other top-security prison, Puente Grande, in the western state of Jalisco.

Former Mexican Attorney General Jesus Murillo Karam told the AP earlier this year that the U.S. would get Guzman in “about 300 or 400 years” after he served time for all his crimes in Mexico.

He dismissed concerns that Guzman could escape a second time. That risk “does not exist,” Murillo Karam said.

“It wasn’t overconfidence; it was Mexican judicial nationalism,” said Raul Benitez, a security expert at Mexico’s National Autonomous University. “First he had to pay his debt in Mexico and then in the U.S. Now it’s very evident that it was a mistake.”

Speaking up for the disenfranchised, pope reaches out to all

ASUNCION, Paraguay (AP)—Pope Francis reinforced his place as spokesman for the world’s disenfranchised Sunday by visiting a flood-prone slum to encourage its landless and insisting the Catholic Church be a place of welcome for all—sick and sinners especially.

Francis ended his South American pilgrimage with a huge Mass and words of hope and faith for young and old. But the political, anti-capitalist message he left behind may have a more lasting punch.

On the final day, Francis sought to offer a message of hope to the residents of the Banado Norte shantytown and to an estimated 1 million people gathered for his farewell Mass on the same swampy field where St. John Paul II proclaimed Paraguay’s first saint nearly 30 years ago.

“How much pain can be soothed, how much despair can be allayed in a place where we feel at home!” Francis said.

Then he outlined his vision of the church: “Welcoming those who do not think as we do, who do not have faith or who have lost it. Welcoming the persecuted, the unemployed. Welcoming the different cultures, of which our Earth is so richly blessed. Welcoming sinners.”

The stage for the Mass was a remarkable sight: A huge triptych with the pope’s Jesuit insignia over the central altar, flanked by images of his namesake, St. Francis of Assisi, on one side and the founder of his Jesuit religious order, St. Ignatius Loyola, on the other. The entire structure was a mosaic, an ode to the role Jesuit missionaries had in Paraguay, made out of 40,000 ears of corn, 200,000 coconuts, 1,000 squash gourds and many, many dried beans.

Artist Koki Ruiz told The Associated Press earlier in the week that the scene was an “homage to the ancient Guarani aborigines who respected Mother Earth.”

Francis has emphasized care for creation and its most oppressed people during his tour of Ecuador, Bolivia and Paraguay. He drew cheers when he arrived at the start of the day in the Banado Norte shantytown on the banks of the River Paraguay saying he couldn’t have left Paraguay without visiting, “without being on your land.”

Many residents of Banado Norte are squatters on municipal land who have come from rural areas in the northeastern part of the country where farmland has been increasingly bought up by Brazilians and multinational companies. Residents argue they should be given title to the land because they have worked to make it habitable with little help from the city.

Iran talks hit final stage, announcement expected

VIENNA (AP)—Negotiations over Iran’s nuclear program entered their 17th—and possibly last—day in Vienna on Monday as diplomats continued to haggle over details ahead of the expiration of an interim accord.

With the temporary deal set to expire at midnight Monday Vienna time (6 p.m. ET), diplomats said they were planning to complete and announce a final agreement before day’s end. But, they warned there was no guarantee with several issues still unresolved. The deadline for the end of the current round of negotiations has already been extended three times and the diplomats said there was little appetite for a fourth.

After more than two weeks of see-saw developments, including threats from both the United States and Iran to walk away, senior officials at the talks began expressing optimism that a deal was in reach on Sunday.

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry said twice that he was “hopeful” and met again with Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Sunday evening. After that meeting, foreign ministers and senior officials from the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and Germany held a group dinner.

In another sign of a potential agreement, the foreign ministers of Russia and China, who had left the talks in Vienna last week, both returned to the Austrian capital late Sunday.

French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius also was cautiously optimistic, telling reporters on Sunday that he believed the negotiations were entering their “last phase.”

In Iran, President Hassan Rouhani said an agreement was close, but not quite done, describing the negotiations as “still steps away from reaching the intended peak.”

Movement toward a deal has been marked by years of tough negotiations. The pact is meant to impose long-term, verifiable limits on nuclear programs that Tehran could modify to produce weapons. Iran, in return, would get tens of billions of dollars in sanctions relief.

Diplomats familiar with the talks said most of the nuts and bolts of implementing the deal have been agreed upon. But over the past week, issues that were previously on the backburner have led to new disputes. Among them is Iran’s demand for a lifting of a U.N. arms embargo and its insistence that any U.N. Security Council resolution approving the nuclear deal be written in a way that stops describing Iran’s nuclear activities as illegal.

A diplomat familiar with the negotiations said disagreements also persist on how long some of the restrictions on imports of nuclear technology and other embargos outlined in any new Security Council resolution will last. The diplomat, who demanded anonymity because the diplomat wasn’t allowed to discuss the confidential talks, said restrictions will last for years, not months.

South Sudan state to bar UN official over rights report

JUBA, South Sudan (AP)—A U.N. diplomat based in South Sudan’s northern Unity state will be expelled from the state in a retaliatory move following the publication of a human rights report last month that accused government forces of committing widespread attacks on civilians there, a South Sudanese official said Sunday.

The decision to expel Mary Cummins was made in a state Cabinet meeting, deputy state governor Mabek Lang told The Associated Press. Cummins is head of the U.N. mission in Unity state. UNMISS’ human rights division released a report on June 30 accusing government forces of committing human rights abuses, including killing women and children, gang rape and burning people.

South Sudan’s presidential spokesman Ateny Wek Ateny said the national government hasn’t received a request from Unity state to expel Cummings from the country.

UNMISS acting spokesman Joe Contreras said that the mission is aware of reports that the mission’s top official in Unity state shouldn’t return to her duty station.

In May, South Sudan expelled U.N. humanitarian coordinator Toby Lanzer. U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, through a spokesman, condemned the government of South Sudan for its decision to expel Lanzer, saying he has been instrumental in addressing the increasing humanitarian needs in the country.

South Sudan, which on Thursday marked four years of independence, has been plagued by violence since December 2013 as government troops battle rebels led by a former deputy president.

South Sudan became the world’s newest nation in 2011 following a vote to secede from northern neighbor Sudan. But the young country fell into war after just 18 months as a result of a political dispute between President Salva Kiir and his former deputy, Riek Machar, who is now the leader of rebel forces controlling some parts of South Sudan.

Focus

Counterfeiter gets green card after evading US lawsuits

SHANGHAI (AP)—This could be the story of an American dream. An immigrant family builds a successful business and buys a four-bedroom house in a quiet neighborhood with good schools for their young son. But not all is as it seems on the steep, curving streets of San Diego's Rancho Penasquitos.

A 45-year-old Chinese woman, Xu Ting, lives in a brown shingle house with a weedy driveway. She has been sued for counterfeiting by eight luxury brands, including Gucci and Louis Vuitton, and owes Chanel Inc. $6.9 million in damages. None of this has stopped her from becoming a legal permanent resident of the United States and achieving a comfortable suburban life.

China is not the only country with a counterfeiting problem. Most fakes are made in China, but they are sold in America. Counterfeiting is not a priority on par with drug smuggling or money laundering, and is rarely prosecuted as a crime. The lack of legal cooperation with China makes it easy for counterfeiters to move their money beyond the reach of Western law enforcement—and hard to root out counterfeiting kingpins. As long as counterfeiters can stay out of jail and hold on to their profits—and consumers continue to buy—the trade in fakes will likely thrive.

Despite spending millions on brand protection, companies often end up playing whack-a-mole, shutting down producers and distributors of fakes, only to see them pop up again. Xu Ting simply refused to show up in court over the years. Instead, doing graduate studies in statistics at San Diego State University, helped her family amass at least $890,000 in bank accounts back in China, and bought the $585,000 Rancho Penasquitos house with her husband, who has also been involved in selling counterfeit luxury goods, public records and court cases in China and the U.S. show.

"There's a million ways to game the system," said Dan Plane, an intellectual property lawyer at Simone IP Services in Hong Kong, who is not involved in litigation against Xu Ting. "Probably the only thing that's going to stop her is when she passes away—probably on an island resort somewhere—or if she gets arrested."

FINDING XU TING

In the web of lies that counterfeiters weave—fake names, fake addresses, fake Internet domain registrations—one thing is always true: their bank account information.

The need to get paid is the counterfeiter's fatal flaw, and Xu Ting's bank accounts were the first crack in her armor of misdirection.

Her legal troubles began in 2008, when a federal judge in California ordered Xu Ting—who declined multiple requests for comment for this story—to pay Chanel Inc. $6.9 million in damages for selling counterfeits online. She still hasn't paid the damages, according to Chanel spokeswoman Kathrin Schurrer.

"The essential point for Chanel is really shutting down the counterfeiting operations, which we did successfully," Schurrer wrote in an email.

AP

In this Thursday, June 18, 2015 photo, a man walks outside a building in Beijing where an apartment is listed in Chinese official documents as being registered to Xu Ting, her younger brother Xu Lei, and their mother Zhao Peiyuan.

But after the lawsuit, Xu Ting's business continued to grow.

In 2009, a Florida judge ruled against Xu Ting and shut down seven websites she was accused of helping run that sold fake Louis Vuitton, Marc Jacobs and Celine. She did not show up in court.

That case didn't stop her either.

The next year, Gucci, Balenciaga, Bottega Veneta and Yves Saint Laurent—all brands belonging to France's Kering group—filed a lawsuit in New York federal court against Xu Ting, her future husband, her younger brother, her mother and six others who the companies said sold more than $2 million worth of fake handbags and wallets online to U.S. customers. Gucci alleges that the group shipped merchandise from China to a house in San Diego, where it was repackaged and passed off as genuine.

Four days after the suit was filed, Xu Ting married a Chinese man, Xu Lijun, a civil engineer licensed in California who is six years her junior, according to her marriage license issued in the San Diego suburb of El Cajon.

Gucci subpoenaed banking records. JP Morgan Chase handed over account records with a wealth of information about the couple: addresses, dates of birth, driver's license, Social Security and passport numbers and a student identification card.

In November 2010, Xu Lijun reached a settlement with Gucci—the only defendant to do so. He denied wrongdoing but agreed to let Gucci keep $400,000 in counterfeiting proceeds seized from accounts outside China. He also agreed to pay a $7,500 fine, according to a copy of the judge's order.

Eric Siegle, a New York City lawyer who represented Xu Lijun, said he was "a small-time nobody," and that Gucci's lawsuit, like many others, failed to tackle the real powers behind the operation.

"The people they are arresting or suing here in the United States are low-level people," Siegle said. "If you can find where the money is going, you can get to the heart of the problem. It's like the drug wars. Why are we arresting all these kids on street corners?"

But Gucci, which is seeking $12 million in damages, couldn't find where the money was going because Chinese banks, including the state-run Bank of China, refused to disclose transaction details about the counterfeiters' accounts in China.

"BOC cannot comply with such orders without violating Chinese law," the Bank of China said in an email.

Kering declined to comment on pending litigation, but spokeswoman Charlotte Judet said in an email that Gucci would "vigorously enforce any judgment eventually entered against individuals who seek to tarnish its worldwide reputation for excellence no matter where they are located."

Meanwhile, in 2013, Xu Lijun bought the house in Rancho Penasquitos, according to property records. Two weeks after the sale, Xu Ting transferred her stake in the property to her husband. Immigration authorities have the Rancho Penasquitos address on record as her residence, said a person with access to immigration records who spoke on condition of anonymity because the information is not public.

A slight man in wire-rimmed glasses who answered the door at the Rancho Penasquitos house identified himself as Xu Lijun. Behind him, in a two-story foyer, there were voices of a woman and young child. Xu Lijun asked an Associated Press reporter why he had come, then said, "I don't want to talk to you."

At a sprawling company compound in Beijing, no one answered the door at Xu Ting's family apartment.

"After your colleague's visit, we communicated and she still did not want to do the interview," the family's lawyer in Beijing, Chen Peng, said. He declined to comment in detail on the U.S. court cases against Xu Ting and her family, but said they were not the prime culprits.

"My client also thinks making counterfeits is illegal, but they did not make them," Chen said. "She is exercising her rights when choosing not to appear in court, which shouldn't merit any moral or legal judgment."

GREEN CARD? NO PROBLEM

Xu Ting's legal troubles did not prevent her from getting a green card. In February 2014, she became a legal permanent resident by virtue of being married to someone with an advanced degree or "extraordinary ability," according to the person familiar with the matter.

U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services spokesman Christopher Bentley declined to comment, citing privacy concerns.

Dan Kowalski, an immigration attorney and editor of Bender's Immigration Bulletin, said immigration officials may not have known about Xu Ting's legal problems but, more likely, didn't consider them disqualifying. Grounds for denying a green card range from committing a serious crime to having communicable disease but there's nothing about civil liabilities. "A vaguer requirement for "good moral character" is more commonly applied for citizenship, not legal residence.

In the U.S., most counterfeiting prosecutions are civil cases brought by companies seeking to shut down websites selling fakes and get financial compensation. Criminal cases, which lawyers say are a far more effective deterrent, are rare.

"A person is more likely to be struck by lightning than imprisoned for counterfeiting," said Geoffrey Potter, an intellectual property lawyer at New York's Patterson Belknap Webb & Tyler.

In an email, Justice Department spokesman Peter Carr said, "Large-scale commercial counterfeiting is one of the top enforcement priorities of the department's Intellectual Property Task Force, which continues to have a number of significant prosecutions."

The Department of Homeland Security seized $1.2 billion worth of fakes at U.S. borders last year, but the Justice Department filed just 91 criminal cases for selling counterfeit goods and services in fiscal year 2014. By comparison, the Justice Department filed 22,530 cases for immigration violations, 12,184 cases for drug-related offenses and 12,509 violent crime cases during the same period.

The National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center, a multiagency group led by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, reports slightly more counterfeit-related crime—683 arrests, 454 indictments, 461 convictions in the 2014 fiscal year—because its tally includes local prosecutions and counterfeit-related activity, like wire fraud.

Decisions about whether to prosecute criminally typically start with a U.S. attorney's office, whose priorities vary by district, said Bruce Foucart, director of the multiagency group. Some may give weight to the volume of faked goods, others to the suspect's history. If the U.S. attorney's office declines a case, investigators try to persuade local prosecutors.

China is the largest source country for seized counterfeit goods, and apparel and accessories are the largest category of merchandise. Foucart, who didn't know about Xu Ting, said luxury goods are typically made in Guangzhou and sent by container or courier like FedEx to the U.S. They may be sold in stores or flea markets but are usually hawked online.

"Unfortunately, once you shut one (website) down, they have 10 more ready to open up in a different name," said Foucart.

Brand owners also bear responsibility. Government agencies often rely on them for tips and investigative legwork.

U.S. law gives companies broad powers to enforce court judgments. Unpaid judgments accrue interest and last for 20 years, said Potter, the intellectual property lawyer. Even a bankruptcy won't erase the debt. "The counterfeiter can't own a business, buy a house, have a bank account or borrow money from a bank," Potter said. "If the counterfeiter takes a regular job, the judgment holder can garnish her wages."

But doing the kind of work required to root out debtors like Xu Ting—public records searches to see whether they own real estate, subpoenaing credit card bills to track spending habits, hiring investigators to determine whether they have jobs—takes relentless commitment, and money.

Schurrer, the Chanel spokeswoman, declined to comment in detail on Xu Ting but said California law prohibits seizure of a primary residence in civil litigation.

Overdrive

The 2015 Mercedes-Benz S550 Coupe flips the bird at practicality

By LARRY PRINTZ
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Before there was an Oldsmobile Toronado, Cadillac Eldorado, Buick Riviera or Continental Mark II, there was the 1952 Mercedes-Benz 300 S Coupe, the first in a series of full-size grand touring coupes meant to add a dash of spice to Mercedes-Benz's top-of-the-line model range. If the sedans were built for heads of state, the coupes were built for their significant others. But no matter how popular coupes became—and the mid-1970s and 1980s were their heyday in the U.S.—they have since become automotive unicorns: infrequently bought and rarely seen.

TNS

The the 2016 Mercedes-Benz S-Class Coupe acknowledges practicality, but doesn't live by it.

That's why the 2016 Mercedes-Benz S-Class Coupe is so welcome. It acknowledges practicality—after all it does have a 10.36 cubic-foot trunk—but doesn't live by it. How refreshing in an era when the letters S, U and V seem to be the only answer to most consumers' transportation needs.

There are three versions of the S-Class Coupe, starting with the all-wheel-drive S550 4MATIC. Powered by a 4.7-liter twin turbocharged V-8 rated at 449 horsepower and 516 pound-feet of torque, this Coupe whisks you from the stoplight to 60 mph in 4.5 seconds for a mere $119,900, plus $925 destination charge and options. Are you truly in a hurry? Then you'll want the all-wheel-drive S63 AMG 4MATIC for a bit more, $160,900. You'll reach 60 mph a half-second quicker, thanks to a 5.5-liter twin turbocharged V-8 producing 577 horsepower and 664 pound-feet of torque. But for some, only a V-12 will do. That's why the S65 AMG exists. For $230,900, you get 621 horsepower and 738 pound-feet of torque and races to 60 mph in 4 seconds, slightly slower than the less-expensive S63.

Of course, getting a car to go fast is easy; making it desirable is more difficult.

That explains this car's sublime styling, with sensuous curves offset by crisp character lines and capped by a stunning grille flanked by LED headlamps accented with 47 Swarovski crystals. It's fetching allure needs no explanation.

The S550 Coupe's exceptional nature continues inside, where a wraparound instrument panel is anchored by two enormous thin-film-transistor flat screens; one for the instrument cluster, the other for infotainment and climate controls. The high tech touches are offset by an interior awash in leather; ordering the "designo" option adds diamond quilted leather. A large panoramic glass roof is above you, with optional "Magic Sky Control" to control its opacity. However, it doesn't open.

Being a grand touring coupe, accommodations are grand for those in front; less so in the rear. But with some accommodation from front-seat passengers, there is enough space in the back for short trips.

No matter where you sit, you'll find there's plenty here to indulge you, from climate controlled seats that massage, to aromatherapy and seven ambient lighting settings that set the right mood. And did I mention that this car has heated armrests in addition to a heated steering wheel? Finally, a Bermester audio system adds to the entertainment generated in the car's engine compartment.

NUTS & BOLTS

Mercedes-Benz S550 Coupe

- Mercedes-Benz S550 Coupe
- Engine: 4.7-liter twin turbocharged V-8
- Horsepower: 449
- Torque: 516 pound-feet
- Wheelbase: 115.9 inches
- Length: 197.9 inches
- Curb weight: 4,707-4,839 pounds
- Cargo capacity: 10.36 cubic feet
- EPA fuel economy (city/highway): 13-16/20-24 mpg
- Base prices: $119,900-$230,900
- NHTSA safety rating: Not rated

MOTORING Q&A

Does a service bulletin cover my out-of-warranty car?

By PAUL BRAND
STAR TRIBUNE (MINNEAPOLIS)

Q: Do you have any information on radiator fluid getting into the transmissions of 2005 Nissan Xterras? Is there a service bulletin? I believe a service bulletin would require the dealer to repair according to the bulletin, even after the end of warranty. Is that correct?

A: Based on consumer pressure and a class-action lawsuit in 2012, Nissan has extended warranty coverage on transmission failures due to coolant contamination on 2005-2010 Frontiers, Pathfinders and Xterras out to eight years/80,000 miles with no cost to owners. For 8- to 9-year-old vehicles with 80,000-90,000 miles, the customer is responsible for $2,500 of the repair. For 9- to 10-year-old vehicles with 90,000-100,000 miles, the car owner pays $3,000.

The origin of the problem is cracked radiators that allow coolant to mix with fluid circulating through the transmission cooler section of the radiator. There is no external leak, so discovery of the issue occurs in one of two ways—the car owner monitoring transmission fluid level and color for evidence of coolant, or eventual major transmission problems. While this extended warranty may provide significant relief for some vehicle owners, once beyond eight years and 80,000 miles, the majority of the repair—typically in the $3,000-$4,000 range—is the owner's responsibility.

To answer your specific question, yes, a technical service bulletin issued by an automaker would direct the dealer to repair the vehicle as outlined in the bulletin. If the problem developed during the warranty—or extended warranty—period, it would be a covered repair. If the problem developed after the warranty period, the repair would not automatically be covered.

Q: I have been very interested in reading the discussion in your column about the importance of tire size in four-wheel-drive vehicles. The tires on my 2004 Honda CR-V are about 4 years old and still in pretty good condition. The spare tire has never been used and is in perfect condition. If I get a flat tire, would it damage my drivetrain to mount the spare and drive to a repair shop to have the flat fixed, or would I be better off calling a tow truck and having the car towed? How far could one drive on uneven-sized tires before damage to the drivetrain would occur? This also brings up the question as to what is the purpose of the spare if using it could damage the car?

A: Who knew that talking tires could be so interesting? As my recent columns reported, a tire with a rolling diameter perhaps 1 percent smaller (or larger) than the other tires would not create any serious mechanical binding or damage to the drivetrain. Assuming the drive to the repair shop is relatively short, I don't think there would be any concerns.

Back to the fun! The 205/70-15 tires on your vehicle were 26.3 inches in diameter with about 10/32nds of an inch of tread when new, as is the spare. Assuming the tires are worn significantly—down to perhaps 4/32nds of an inch of tread remaining—the difference in diameter between the new spare and the worn tires would be 12/32nds. Here's the math: 6/32nds of wear equals 12/32nds difference in diameter, 12/32nds is 0.375 inches. And 26.3 minus 0.375 equals 25.9, which when divided by the original 26.3 gives us a difference of about 1 percent.

Your spare tire is completely usable.

Q: I have a 2009 four-cylinder Malibu with 61,000 miles on it. After driving for about 20 minutes, its rpm revs up, the car surges, then goes back to normal but keeps repeating the revving and the surging. Please advise.

A: This could be the torque converter locking and unlocking, the transmission downshifting and upshifting or possibly transmission slippage. Simple possibilities include brake light switch adjustment, clogged catalytic converter (covered by federal warranty for eight years/80,000 miles), engine vacuum leak or some other cause of momentary engine power reduction.

Start with a scan tool check for DTC fault codes—engine and transmission—and an exhaust back-pressure test.

Paul Brand, author of How to Repair Your Car, *is an automotive troubleshooter, driving instructor and former race-car driver. Readers may write to him at:* Star Tribune, *425 Portland Ave. S., Minneapolis, Minn., 55488 or via email at paulbrand@startribune.com. Please explain the problem in detail and include a daytime phone number. Because of the volume of mail, we cannot provide personal replies.*

UNDER THE HOOD

Static issue with car radio should be easily fixable

By BRAD BERGHOLDT
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Q: Your column is interesting to read even though most of what you talk about is beyond my repair capabilities. The radio in my 2011 Ford Focus has a lot of static on the AM stations. I enjoy hearing the news, traffic reports and weather when driving, but the static can get so loud it drowns everything else out. Is there anything I can check before I go to a garage for service? If service is my only option, do I go to a dealer garage or to a store that sells and repairs car radio systems? Thanks.—Barb Milcic

A: I hear you, Barb. Many years back my kid's kindergarten teacher told me pretty much the same thing. She was a very neat lady and in the interest of keeping her onboard I've tried ever since to trim the techie stuff as much as possible. Each week, before pressing the send key, I ask myself, would Nancy read this?

Your AM radio static could have several sources, and the issue is likely fixable. Does the noise vary with engine speed or is it constant? Would the noise be the same if you tried listening with the key on and engine off, also known as KOEO? Or does the noise change when certain accessories are in use? If the static occurs mainly with the engine running or accessories in use we'll call this a suppression problem. The source needs to be identified and repaired or filtered. Examples are an alternator or ignition system fault. The latter is less likely on recent vehicles. A noise filter is a device that can be added to the wire supplying power to the radio but it's more of a band aid than a fix.

If the static occurs at all times, it's possible the antenna has a poor connection. The AM band is fussier about a proper antenna than the FM band. A common fault with mast type antennas is the mast has come slightly loose from the base (screw it back in securely). Corrosion at the antenna cable terminal/radio socket is also possible. Finally, it's possible the antenna cable inner conductor or outer ground sleeve have failed. This can be easily tested with the radio removed for access.

Where to take it for diagnosis? Either of your two suggestions should work as long as the technician assigned has training and experience in this skill area. Ask questions when considering an appointment. The person you speak to will likely not be the one doing the work but may give you a feeling about the chances for repair success.

Q: What's the difference between a "dual clutch" transmission and a regular stick shift?—Zach P.

A: A dual clutch transmission is basically two manual transmissions in one box, without a pedal-operated clutch. A pair of computer controlled wet clutches allow stops and starts and almost seamless shifting. The odd and even gears each have their own clutch, so during an up-shift the next gear can be already engaging as the first one is released. This reduces acceleration time, saves fuel and provides an almost interruption-free rush of acceleration. Shifts can be either manually selected with steering wheel paddles or automatically done. Enjoyed first on European vehicles (Volkswagen was a significant pioneer), dual clutches are catching on universally and are now found within many vehicle brands.

Brad Bergholdt is an automotive technology instructor at Evergreen Valley College in San Jose, Calif. Readers may send him email at under-the-hood(at) earthlink.net; he cannot make personal replies.

Life & Style

Miss Oklahoma wins Miss USA contest

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP)—Olivia Jordan of Oklahoma was crowned Miss USA on Sunday, wearing a hot pink strapless dress as she deftly fielded the interview portion of the competition by saying the country needed to improve race relations to beat out 50 other contestants.

After weeks of controversy generated by pageant co-owner Donald Trump's critical comments about Mexican immigrants, the pageant passed with no mention of the real estate mogul who was not in attendance.

Instead, the focus was on women like Jordan and others who'd worked hard to get to the stage.

The 26-year-old winner was followed by first runner-up Ylianna Guerra, 22, of Texas, and second runner-up Anea Garcia, 20, of Rhode Island. They were followed by 25-year-old Miss Nevada Brittany McGown as third runner-up and then Miss Maryland Mame Adjei, 23, rounding out the top five.

Jordan, who takes over from 2014 winner Nia Sanchez of Nevada, was a standout during the interview segment when each contestant was asked two questions and given 30 seconds to answer each. When asked what the next big issue is that the U.S. needs to tackle, she said it was race relations.

"We have not solved this issue," Jordan said. "We really need to work on being an accepting society."

During the second interview question about which woman should be put on the new $10 bill, she initially said she wished television star Oprah Winfrey was eligible before ending by suggesting Harriet Tubman, a former slave who led other escaped slaves to freedom.

AP

Miss Oklahoma Olivia Jordan is crowned Miss USA by Miss USA 2014 Nia Sanchez during the 2015 Miss USA pageant in Baton Rouge, La., Sunday, July 12, 2015.

Asked afterward by The Associated Press about the Trump controversy, Jordan responded: "We have freedom of speech in this country, and immigration is certainly an important issue."

She added, "This organization is not one person. It's definitely not just me. It's a family. This organization celebrates diversity, and I think that was clear on the stage tonight, and I look forward to spreading a message of love and diversity and acceptance."

The annual contest, generally known for its dazzling dresses and sexy swimsuits, was this year under an uncomfortable spotlight due to comments made by Trump, the pageant's co-owner.

Trump slammed Mexican immigrants during his announcement that he was running for president. That led to widespread fallout against his business dealings, including the pageant.

Broadcasters, including NBC and Univision, dropped the pageant and a slew of celebrities lined up to perform, judge and host dropped out just as the pageant was kicking into high gear in Baton Rouge.

Pageant organizers rushed to fill the gap so the show could go on. Satellite and cable channel Reelz television stepped in to air the show, while assuring people that Trump would not benefit financially. It was also streamed live on the pageant's website. And former Miss USA and Miss Universe winners were recruited as judges.

The pageant featured an evening wear and swimsuit competition as well as the question and answer session. The preliminary contest was held earlier this week and then the number of women remaining was progressively narrowed during the course of Sunday evening's telecast.

Jordan, of Tulsa, Oklahoma attended Boston University, where she earned a B.S. in Health Science and was a group fitness instructor and a personal trainer. She has appeared in several national and international commercials and feature films, most recently, Hot Tub Time Machine 2.

Paula Shugart, who heads the Miss Universe Organization, thanked the CEO of Reelz and the returning pageant winners for stepping in to help during a news conference Sunday.

"I love you all. You are the only reason we exist," she said to the women during a news conference Sunday.

Shugart said the challenges of the past few weeks will make for great practice for whichever woman is crowned Miss USA, teaching them how to stay focused: "You have to forget everything going on around you."

When asked if the relationship between the pageant and Reelz would last beyond Sunday night, Stan Hubbard said the agreement was for one night only.

The 51 women represented every state and the District of Columbia.

Jordan will hold the title for a year and will go on to represent the United States in the Miss Universe pageant.

First footage of 'X-Men: Apocalypse,' 'Deadpool' shown

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Screams and cheers are cheap at Comic-Con, but the energy stepped up a notch Saturday evening after fans got their first look at "Deadpool."

Not only did the trailer for the irreverent film starring Ryan Reynolds get a standing ovation, but soon the 6,500-person Hall H audience started chanting, "One more time!"

Host Chris Hardwick seemed momentarily flustered, explaining that he doesn't actually have that power. But he asked the A/V gods if it was possible, and soon, the blood-soaked, expletive-laced trailer was playing again.

It seems fitting for a movie 11 years in the making that Reynolds said was only green-lit because of the enthusiasm of the fans.

The Marvel antihero, known for his salty language and off-humor, is given an origin story in this film, which comes out Feb. 12.

Perhaps the main event of the Twentieth Century Fox presentation, which also included looks at "Fantastic Four," the "Maze Runner" sequel and "Victor Frankenstein," was "X-Men: Apocalypse."

The veil was stripped away from the highly secretive film as director Bryan Singer revealed that it takes place 10 years after the events of "X-Men: Days of Future Past" in 1983.

This is a world that has grown to accept mutants, mostly. But a mysterious and influential sect has risen that believes the mutants are gods.

While Jennifer Lawrence said her character in this outing is more Raven than Mystique, Michael Fassbender stayed ambiguous about whether we'd be seeing Erik or Magneto.

"I think he's a guy who plays both sides. He's always that kind of ambiguous villain," said Fassbender. "When we meet him, he's more of a simple guy, living a normal life. He's hung up his cape and his evil ways."

The footage also showed the first glimpse at Oscar Isaac's villain Apocalypse and Sophie Turner's young Jean Grey.

"X-Men: Apocalypse" is only five weeks into shooting and will be released on May 27.

Meanwhile, "The Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials," out Sept. 18, showcased a new trailer and an extended look at the new monster of the movie: the Cranks. In the film, they're terrifying, slimy, zombielike creatures.

"We have a bit of a horror movie on our hands," said director Wes Ball. "This movie is way bigger than the first one."

Dylan O'Brien said his protagonist Thomas is "for the first time feeling defeated and angry." And new cast member Giancarlo Esposito said his character, Jorge, is just as explosive as his "Breaking Bad" character Gus Fring.

Daniel Radcliffe and James McAvoy also came out to talk about their film "Victor Frankenstein," out Nov. 25. It's inspired by Mary Shelley's novel but told from Igor's (Radcliffe) perspective. McAvoy said the film is about obsession, and the relationship between Igor and Victor.

"I'm trying to pull him back from the edge of insanity. How do you stand up and tell someone they're wrong when they've given you everything you have?" said Radcliffe.

They also showed a clip of the terrifying moment the homunculus comes to life.

Also in attendance were the cast and filmmakers of "Fantastic Four," who premiered the final trailer for the film, out Aug. 7.

Director Josh Trank said that he had not been to Comic-Con since he was 15.

Nintendo President Satoru Iwata, 55, dies of tumor

AP

In this Jan. 31, 2013 file photo, Nintendo Co. President Satoru Iwata speaks during a news conference in Tokyo.

TOKYO (AP)—Satoru Iwata, who led Japanese video game company Nintendo Co. through years of growth with its Pokemon and Super Mario franchises, died July 11 of a bile duct tumor, the company said Monday. He was 55.

Iwata, president from 2002, died in a Kyoto University hospital. He had not been seen recently at game events, such as E3 in Los Angeles, where he was usually a participant.

Iwata led Nintendo's development into a global company, with its hit Wii home console and DS handheld, and also through its recent woes caused by the popularity of smartphones.

His replacement was not immediately announced, but the company said star game designer Shigeru Miyamaoto will remain in the leadership team along with Genyo Takeda.

Iwata had been poised to lead Nintendo through another stage after it recently did an about-face and said it will start making games for smartphones—meaning that Super Mario the plumber will start arriving on cellphones and tablets.

The falloff in appetite for game machines in the past few years was partly because people are increasingly playing games or doing social media and other activities on smartphones. Nintendo has repeatedly had to lower prices on gadgets to woo buyers.

Until the recent shift in strategy, company officials including Iwata had repeatedly rejected the idea of developing games for mobile devices, a market that they brushed off for years as irrelevant.

In March, Nintendo announced an alliance with Japanese mobile game company DeNA Co. to develop games for mobile devices.

The company returned to profit in the fiscal year ended March 2015 after several years of losses.

Nintendo pioneered game machines since the 1980s, developing one of the first machines and the hit Game Boy hand-held machine.

Its main rivals in the business are Sony Corp. with the PlayStation machines and Microsoft Corp. with the Xbox One machine. Both companies have done better in adapting to the era of online and mobile games.

Comic-Con no-shows signal shifting times for big movies

SAN DIEGO (AP)—There's a Hulk-sized hole at Comic-Con this year. Three of the major studios and Disney/Marvel are not hosting a panel in the main hall at the annual fan festival. That means no Iron Man, no Captain America, and no Spider-Man—at least their filmed versions.

Going back to 2010, Marvel has been a main event at Comic-Con, with its Disney properties usually serving as the marquis presentations. With a slate that extends through 2019, a film currently in production ("Captain America: Civil War") and another coming out next week ("Ant-Man"), Marvel's no-show seems like an odd choice.

The studio's absence in the San Diego Convention Center's huge Hall H is not only dispiriting to fans, it's also a subtle sign that the 45-year-old pop-culture extravaganza has become less relevant to the shifting marketing strategies of the major studios.

Sony Pictures, which just announced its new Spider-Man star (Tom Holland) and director (Jon Watts), also decided against a major presence. While it might have been too early to do anything with "Spider-Man," which hits theaters in 2017, the studio's all-female "Ghostbusters" is currently shooting yet is nowhere to be seen at Comic-Con. On Friday, director Paul Feig could only tweet a photo of his cast in their jumpsuits.

For other studios, like Paramount, there just isn't a Comic-Con-friendly property in the works. Last year, the studio brought "Interstellar" and a usually Comic-Con shy Christopher Nolan as its big surprise. But the gesture didn't help the film reach stratospheric heights at the domestic box office.

Instead of Hall H, this year Paramount is promoting "Scout's Guide to the Zombie Apocalypse" at an interactive installation outside the Convention Center.

Rotten Tomatoes Editor in Chief Matt Atchity recalls films that were previewed and rapturously received at Comic-Con, and then flopped in mainstream release—like "Dredd" and "Scott Pilgrim vs. The World."

While fans have already been treated to a rousing presentation from the filmmakers and cast of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," and can expect previews of Warner Bros. " Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice" and Fox's "The Fantastic Four" and "X-Men: Apocalypse," the Disney/Marvel absence is still striking.

AP

This photo provided by Disney shows Daisey Ridley as Rey, left, and John Boyega as Finn, in a scene from the new film, "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," directed by J.J. Abrams. The movie releases in the U.S. on Dec. 18, 2015.

Marvel Studios President Kevin Feige talked around the fact that his studio wouldn't be coming.

"I will miss it. I love going. I don't miss the mad scramble we usually go through leading up to Hall H," he said recently. "I will be excited to experience it like others do when they're not down there. I'm excited for all the announcements."

Feige also noted that Marvel hosted its own event last October, where the studio announced all of its movies for the next five years.

That's another reason why studios might be reconsidering Comic-Con. Time is limited at the fest, participation is expensive and competition to be the buzziest panel is fierce.

As with the Marvel event, there's now a proliferation of studio- and brand-specific gatherings outside of the Comic-Con realm. Disney is one of the leaders of this movement with its D23 convention, where the studio showcases its upcoming live-action and animated fare, announces castings, screens preview footage and shows off related merchandise.

And now that Disney oversees Lucasfilm, it also inherited the Star Wars Celebration fan event, which this year debuted the full-length trailer for "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," teased some character information and revealed a short synopses for the anthology film "Rogue One."

Disney will likely show more of "The Force Awakens" at the next D23 in August.

Also, while it's not necessarily for fans, there's the competition of CinemaCon, the annual April meeting of theater owners. There, studios trot out major stars, from Tom Cruise to Arnold Schwarzenegger, to hype their films.

And then there's the issue of Comic-Con timing. July is an unusual stretch to be showing movies that fit the Comic-Con mold. It's in the middle of a blockbuster season that is starting earlier and earlier.

Furthermore, previewing upcoming films far in advance sometimes backfires. Director Edgar Wright teased "Ant-Man" for years at Comic-Con before he ultimately dropped out of the project.

Devin Faraci, editor of the movie blog Birth.Movies.Death, thinks the bubble might have burst for studio presence at Comic-Con. He traces overhyping of the convention back to the "Twilight" films. Those feverish fans set an unrealistic standard for movies.

Even "The Hunger Games," which has a fan base that rivals "Twilight" in size, can't compete with the crowds once attracted to Comic-Con by "Twilight."

Universal's 'Minions' swarms box office with $115.2M haul

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Universal's "Minions" overran the box office over the weekend as audiences in the U.S. and Canada shelled out an estimated $115.2 million to see the evil-master-serving horde frolic on the big screen.

It was the second-biggest opening ever for an animated film and an easy win for the sidekicks who took the spotlight after playing supporting roles in two previous "Despicable Me" movies. The bright, babbling baldies have become key characters in the franchise from Universal's Illumination Entertainment.

Directed by Peter Coffin, who co-directed both "Despicable Me" movies and voices the Minions, the movie easily beat "Jurassic World," another Universal picture that grossed $18.1 million in its fifth weekend after release, according to box office tracker Rentrak.

Disney's "Inside Out" ranked third with $17.1 million in its fourth weekend.

"Minions" was a hit overseas as well, taking the No. 1 spot in 29 of the 30 other countries in which it debuted over the weekend, including Mexico, Russia, France and Venezuela. Internationally, the movie has grossed $280.5 million so far.

"Given that they seek to work for the most evil people on the planet, they give off this incredible happiness," said Duncan Clark, Universal's president of international distribution. "I think the quality they're proving to have is a common denominator appeal across all cultures."

AP

In this image released by Universal Pictures, characters, from left, Stuart, Bob, Kevin and Scarlet Overkill, voiced by Sandra Bullock, appear in a scene from the animated feature, "Minions."

Only DreamWorks Animation's "Shrek The Third" opened to a bigger gross in North America in 2007, with $121.6 million, according to Rentrak. "Minions" beat out Disney's "Toy Story 3," which took in $110.3 million on its opening weekend in 2010.

Paul Dergarabedian, Rentrak's senior media analyst, said the Minions captured most of the buzz among "Despicable Me" fans from the start.

"It's always been about these crazy, irreverent, funny characters," Dergarabedian said.

Other studios have created successful spinoffs, such as DreamWorks' "Shrek" side story from 2011, "Puss in Boots." There are also the multi-layered spinoffs in Disney's Marvel universe, including "Ant-Man," which opens next weekend.

"It seems like a foregone conclusion there will be more `Minions' because of the millions they made," Dergarabedian said.

Universal is planning to unleash "Despicable Me 3" in the summer of 2017 and plans a gaggle of other films by Illumination Entertainment. Led by founder and CEO Chris Meledandri, the animated movie studio has become one of Hollywood's most successful.

Ahead of "Minions," Universal showed a trailer from a release for next summer, "The Secret Life of Pets," which explores what pets do when their owners leave them at home unattended. It's also planning to release a holiday 2017 version of Dr. Seuss' "Grinch."

Universal's domestic distribution president, Nicholas Carpou, credits Meledandri with creating movies whose outlandish characters are relatable.

"They're very heartwarming, they're very charming. You think of Gru (the villain from `Despicable Me')—even a villain has a huge heart. I think we're seeing the results of that in the `Minions' right now," he said.

1. "**Minions**," $115.2 million *($124.3 million international).*
2. "**Jurassic World**," $18.1 million *($21.7 million international).*
3. "**Inside Out**," $17.1 million *($19.1 million international).*
4. "**Terminator Genisys**," $13.7 million *($47.3 million international).*
5. "**The Gallows**," $10 million *($1.2 million international).*
6. "**Magic Mike XXL**," $9.6 million *($10.3 million international).*
7. "**Ted 2**," $5.6 million *($12.2 million international).*
8. "**Self/less**," $5.4 million *($55,000 international).*
9. "**Max**," $3.4 million.
10. "**Spy**," $3 million *($1.7 million international).*

Other movies debuting in the Top 10 this past weekend were "The Gallows," an ad-libbed high-school horror movie from Blumhouse Productions, the creator of the "Paranormal Activity" and "Insidious" franchises, and "Self/less," a sci-fi thriller about a near-death billionaire who transmits himself into a younger body.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Rentrak. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday:

Canada-born dramatic tenor Jon Vickers dies at 88

LONDON (AP)—Canada-born opera singer John Vickers, nicknamed "God's tenor" for his inimitable voice and strong Christian beliefs, has died. He was 88.

The Royal Opera House opera, citing a statement from Vickers' family, said he died Friday in the Canadian province of Ontario after a struggle with Alzheimer's disease.

Born in Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, in 1926, Vickers sang as a child in church choirs and aspired to study medicine before winning a scholarship to the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto.

Vickers made his Royal Opera debut in 1957. A year later, he performed at Germany's Bayreuth festival, going on to become one of the world's leading performers of Richard Wagner, acclaimed for roles including Siegmund in "Die Walkuere."

From 1960, he was a regular at New York's Metropolitan Opera, where his signature roles included Benjamin Britten's "Peter Grimes."

Vickers stood out among dramatic tenors for the intensity of his performances and his richly powerful voice, described by critic John Ardoin as "holding a hundred colors and inflections."

"Art is a wrestling with the meaning of life," Vickers once said, and his religious faith informed his artistic choices.

Despite his association with Wagner's works, he found the German composer—whose anti-Semitism made him a favorite of the Nazis—morally objectionable. In 1977, Vickers pulled out of a production of Wagner's "Tannhauser," saying he considered it anti-Christian.

For three decades Vickers performed around the world, collecting devoted fans, numerous honorary degrees, companionship in the Order of Canada and two Grammy Awards.

Vickers retired in 1988. His family's statement said he was "a man of the land who was the most at home on his farm, surrounded by nature and his family."

His wife, Henrietta, died in 1991. He is survived by a sister, five children, 11 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

Raimi looks forward to teenage Spider-Man and middle-age Ash

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Sam Raimi, the director of the original "Spider-Man" movie trilogy, is giving a passing grade to Marvel and Sony for sending the next cinematic rendition of the web-slinger back to high school.

"It's cool that we'll get to see another incarnation," Raimi said in an interview Saturday at Comic-Con. "I think it's a good choice for Marvel to go with high school Peter Parker. It's really interesting. That's where I loved it the most, when he's in high school, struggling to keep his grades up and being bullied by Flash Thompson. It's filled with angst."

Marvel Studios and Sony Pictures announced last month that 19-year-old actor Tom Holland would be taking over the role of Peter Parker in the next Spidey film, set to be directed by Jon Watts and hit theaters July 28, 2017.

Raimi is attending Comic-Con to hype "Ash vs. Evil Dead," an upcoming Starz series starring Bruce Campbell. The campy horror show, which premieres Oct. 31, is set after Raimi's original "Evil Dead" movie trilogy and features Campbell's chainsaw-wielding, trash-talking Ash battling bloody things that go bump in the night.

The "Evil Dead" writer-director, who is serving as executive producer on the 10-part series and is directing the first episode, is pumped for fans of the cult classic to witness Ash's return.

"The situation with this character is so interesting and different," said Raimi. "It's 30 years later. He's not in the cabin anymore. He's not back in time. He's in 2015. Ash is now a middle-aged man who has to fight the Evil Dead."

Besides showing off the latest chapter of the "Evil Dead" series, the Comic-Con veteran is most excited about the rise of attendees sporting costumes at this year's four-day celebration of pop culture.

"I love these people who are really into their makeup and wardrobe," he said. "All they want to do is pose for a picture in character. They're like the best actors in the world. All they really want is the true art of becoming a character. It's not for money or recognition. They just love the art. I love them."

AP

This photo provided by Starz Entertainment shows, Ray Santiago, from left, as Pablo, Bruce Campbell as Ash, and Dana DeLorenzo as Kelly, in the new Starz original series "Ash vs Evil Dead," premiering Fall 2015. Starz will present their San Diego Comic-Con panel of the series on Friday, July 10, 2015.

`Last Witch Hunter' star Elijah Wood shares witches' secret

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Elijah Wood isn't just a star of "The Last Witch Hunter." He apparently knows one of witches' most intimate secrets.

"I'm actually a real fan of witches," Wood said in an interview at Comic-Con, adding that he'd like to see more of them on the big screen.

"There's another witch movie coming out in around October or November called `The Witch.' It's also very good," he said. "So we might see this as a cycle, which I would be fine with because I just feel like no one is exploring witches. They're terrifying."

The 34-year-old actor also knows a bit of their lore: He said the origin of witches flying on broomsticks came from a real pastime.

"There was a salve that they used to put on brooms that would make them high. And they would sit on the broomstick, which would then go into their bloodstream, if you know what I mean, and it would make these women high," he said. "That's where the myth behind the flying witch comes from: a real application of this sort of hallucinogen. It's awesome. We don't get into that in `The Last Witch Hunter,' however."

The film is set for release in October.

'Tomb Raider' star Camilla Luddington navigates Comic-Con

SAN DIEGO (AP)—That brunette woman sporting big black sunglasses on the Comic-Con show floor just might be Lara Croft.

"Tomb Raider" actress Camilla Luddington checked out the pop-culture action in the San Diego Convention Center on Saturday afternoon from behind a pair of shades.

"This is about as disguise-y as I get," she said holding up a pair of specs during an interview. "Comic-Con is actually the best place to not get recognized because there are so many people in amazing costumes. I think that catches the eye more than someone wearing regular clothing, Converse and sunglasses."

The British actress said she's more recognized in public for her role as Dr. Jo Wilson in ABC's "Grey's Anatomy" than as Lara Croft in the new "Tomb Raider" video games, primarily because the developers tweak the virtual character to look more like Croft than Luddington. However, it has happened.

"That always blows my mind, because I assume that people playing the game don't know what I actually look like," said Luddington. "I'm more surprised by that than anything."

Luddington is attending Comic-Con for the second time to promote "Rise of the Tomb Raider," the follow-up to the 2013 reboot of the long-running game series starring the iconic treasure hunter.

"I was at Comic-Con when the first game came out, but you forget how crazy it is until you're here," Luddington said. "It's different this year because a lot of fans were wary of us because we were rebooting the game. I think they're more supportive this time because they loved the first one so much.

After escaping a lethal Asian island in the first game, Croft is headed to Siberia for a mountainous adventure in "Rise of the Tomb Raider."

"I feel like this Lara is more haunted after what happened in the last game," said Luddington. "There's a darker side to her, especially at the start of the game."

'Scream Queens' star Jamie Lee Curtis reigns at Comic-Con

AP

Will Forte, left, a cast member in the television series "The Last Man on Earth," greets Seth MacFarlane, creator of the television series "Family Guy," at the Fox/FX/10th Century Fox TV/Fox International Channels Comic-Con Party, Friday, July 10, 2015, in San Diego, Calif.

SAN DIEGO (AP)—Jamie Lee Curtis took her first slice out of Comic-Con.

The veteran actress made her inaugural appearance at the pop-culture convention Sunday during a panel for FX's "American Horror Story" and Fox's "Scream Queens," the upcoming horror whodunit starring Curtis as the cutthroat dean of a college where a serial killer is on the loose.

Why hasn't the star of the "Halloween" series ever attended Comic-Con? "I've been selling yogurt that makes you (expletive)," joked the Activia spokeswoman.

"American Horror Story" and "Scream Queens" mastermind Ryan Murphy told the 6,500 fans gathered inside the San Diego Convention Center that he didn't want to make "Scream Queens" if Curtis didn't agree to play Cathy Munsch, a college administrator who takes aim at a posh and exclusive sorority on campus in the show's first episode.

"If you're going to hire Jamie Lee Curtis, you want to see her kicking (expletive) and fighting back," Murphy said. "We're actually writing a scene now where she's fighting three killers."

Curtis, who portrayed survivor Laurie Strode in several "Halloween" films, said she's including a nod to the character. "In episode two, there is a wordless homage I threw in just as my tipping of the hat to all the Laurie Strode fans out there," she said.

Murphy noted that the show's actors don't know the exact identity of the killer and are filming different takes of cast members acting as if they are behind the murders.

Woman in wheelchair feels no need to explain her condition

DEAR ABBY: I am a partially disabled person in my 70s. Because of arthritis in my spine and hip, I'm able to stand for only a few minutes and walk only 20 to 30 feet. When I know I am going to be someplace that requires more walking or standing, I use my wheelchair.

My question is: How do I reply to strangers who ask me, "Why are you in a wheelchair?" One lady said, "Oh, is it your knees?" I feel the questions are rude, and I shouldn't have to explain my medical status to people I don't know. I try to mumble something about not being able to stand for long periods, like waiting in line. But I'd really like to respond with a funnier, more flippant reply if I could think of one. Any suggestions?

TRAVELING BY WHEELCHAIR

DEAR TRAVELING: Try one of these "flippant" possibilities: "It's nothing I usually discuss in public, but it's contagious!" Or, "I broke my tailbone dancing at the Bolshoi." Or, "Just lazy, I guess."

However, joking about a medical condition isn't funny. So perhaps you should reconsider and just be honest.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I recently was invited to a surprise 50th-birthday party for my twin sister. Her husband had a family dinner that included all my siblings.

When my brother-in-law invited me, he said my sister didn't want a big party, but he wanted to celebrate our birthdays with this special dinner. I was delighted to attend, but I must admit I was a little hurt when the celebration turned out to be strictly for my sister. My name wasn't on the cake, and only she blew out the candles and opened gifts. (I did receive two cards.)

I know the party was given for her, and I was a gracious guest, but as her twin, I felt awkward and ignored. Am I being overly sensitive, or were they just rude?

TROUBLED TWIN

DEAR TROUBLED TWIN: Oh, my. I don't think your brother-in-law was being rude. But in light of the fact that you and your sister were womb mates, you were treated with incredible insensitivity.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I'm in a sticky situation. My husband, "Chester," can't stand to eat meals with my dad. It's never bothered me, but Dad sometimes "smacks" or talks with food in his mouth. It drives Chester crazy. We visit them every week and meals are always involved. What do I do? Should my husband just get used to it? We decided to ask you for advice before we do anything else.

IN A PICKLE IN TEXAS

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

DEAR IN A PICKLE: Have your mother talk to Dad and "suggest" that their son-in-law is used to more formal table etiquette, so would Dad please make an effort to not chew with his mouth open when the two of you are visiting. I can't promise it will do the trick, but it may make your father more conscious about what he's doing.

■■■

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $14 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Cookbooklet Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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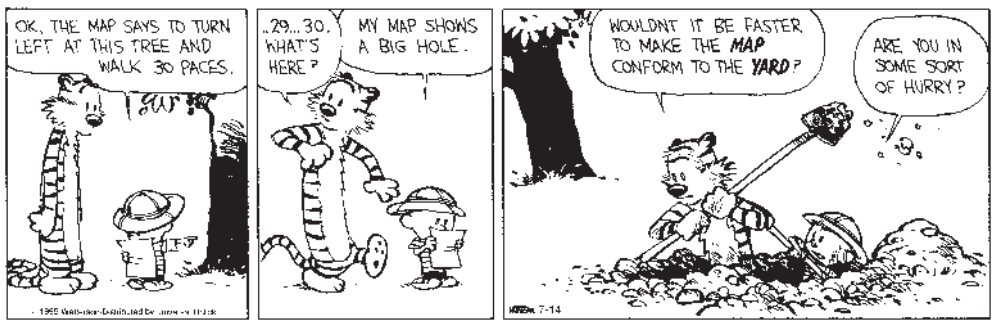
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

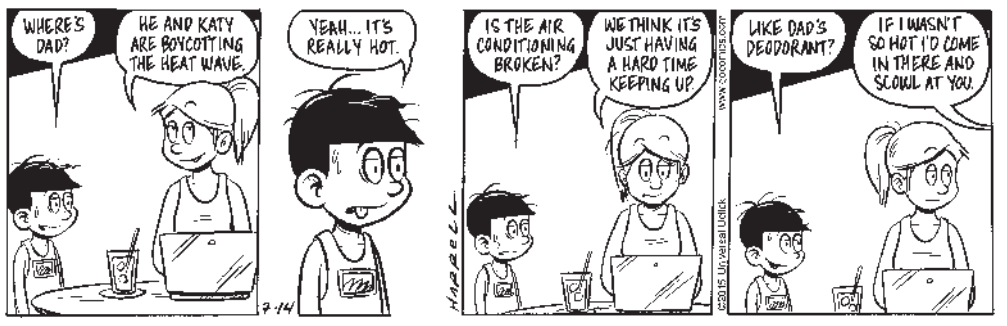

OK, THE MAP SAYS TO TURN LEFT AT THIS TREE AND WALK 30 PACES.
..29...30. WHAT'S HERE?
MY MAP SHOWS A BIG HOLE.
WOULDN'T IT BE FASTER TO MAKE THE MAP CONFORM TO THE YARD?
ARE YOU IN SOME SORT OF HURRY?

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

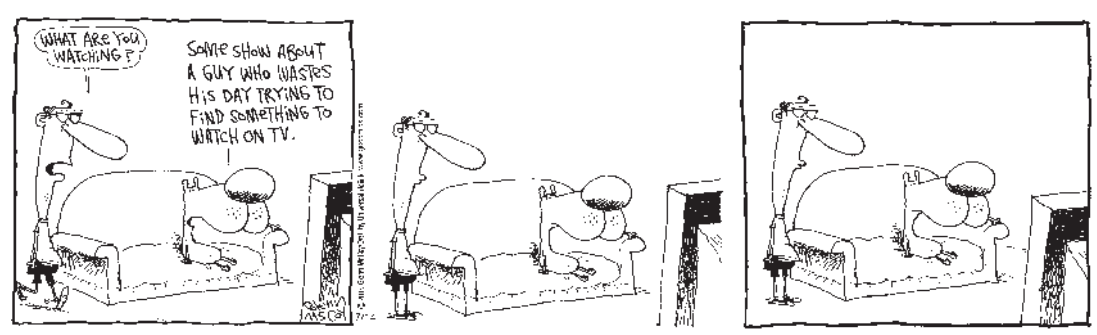
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


WHERE'S DAD?
HE AND KATY ARE BOYCOTTING THE HEAT WAVE.
YEAH... IT'S REALLY HOT.
IS THE AIR CONDITIONING BROKEN?
WE THINK IT'S JUST HAVING A HARD TIME KEEPING UP.
LIKE DAD'S DEODORANT?
IF I WASN'T SO HOT I'D COME IN THERE AND SCOWL AT YOU.

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

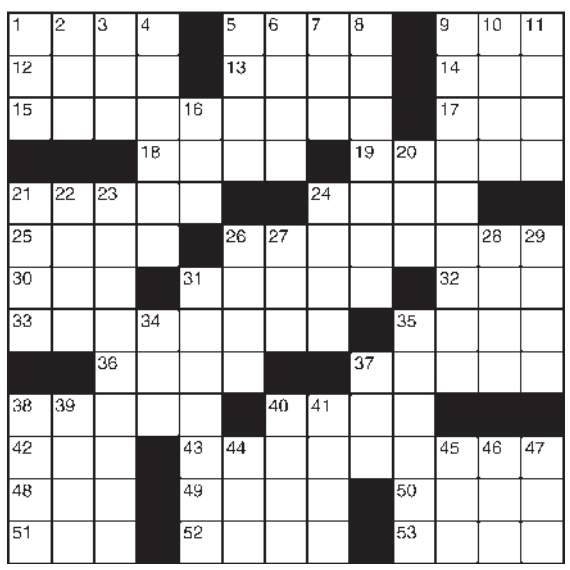


CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Present
5 Watchful one
9 Massage
12 — podrida
13 Bean curd
14 Raw mineral
15 Non-dieter's breakfast?
17 Work with
18 Paraphernalia
19 Frat party outfits
21 Following
24 2007 movie, "In the Valley of —"
25 Lummox
26 Flip-flop
30 Marker
31 Strength
32 Weeding tool
33 Reduces in status
35 Corn recipe
36 Gap
37 Birch cousin
38 Sicily neighbor
40 Got up
42 Flightless bird
43 Lozenge of a sort
48 First X or O?
49 Satanic
50 Fish's lung
51 "Raiders of the Lost —"
52 Logical
53 Vortex

DOWN
1 Deity
2 U.N. workers' grp.
3 Winter ailment
4 Put out a base-runner
5 Sicilian spouter
6 Part of MYOB
7 Small salamander
8 Rancher's foe
9 See 26-Down
10 — Minor
11 Honey bunch
16 That girl
20 Rowing prop
21 Alkali neutralizer
22 Ice sheet
23 "That's a shame"
24 Prior nights
26 With 9-Down, treated harshly
27 Lamb's dam
28 Top-rated
29 Sly look
31 Majestic homes
34 Decay
35 Vow
37 Blond shade
38 Beyond (Pref.)
39 Eastern potentate
40 Destruction
41 Lecherous look
44 Eggs
45 Disencumber
46 Antiquated
47 Thickness



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Scott Porter, 36; Matthew Fox, 49; Jackie Earle Haley, 54; Jane Lynch, 55.

Happy Birthday: Let your creative imagination lead the way. Try new things and check out different philosophies and hobbies. Travel should play a big role in your plans, along with educational opportunities that will help you make professional changes. Research is encouraged and will help you make the best choices for you. Improved discipline will help you hone your skills. Your numbers are 1, 7, 13, 21, 24, 37, 46.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Be sensitive toward others. A feud will escalate quickly if you are too quick to judge. Learn from past mistakes and you will avoid an emotional mishap. Offer affection over criticism, and you will get your way. ✪✪✪✪

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Keep busy, do your research and refuse to make impulsive moves or decisions. Timing is everything, and knowing exactly what's required to reach your goals with the least amount of opposition will result in your success. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Slow down and give yourself a chance to experiment with some of the more obscure ideas you would like to pursue. It's okay to be different, but do your homework before heading down that path. There won't be any room for error. ✪✪✪

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Don't let your emotions get the better of you. Hold your thoughts until you can deal with the responses you get. Someone will put you in your place if you overreact or become aggressive. Exercise will help you curb a growing temper. ✪✪✪

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): A secret affair may be enticing, but think it through before engaging in activities that are likely to end in distress. Think carefully before you jump into something without weighing the pros and cons. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Your dedication and desire to make improvements to whatever cause you join will bring you popularity and clout. Share your plans and use constructive criticism as a bridge to implementing your plans. A partnership will enhance your position. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Problems will mount both at home and at work. Back away if someone tries to force his or her opinions on you. Look to make a change that will benefit you mentally, physically and financially. Don't bend under pressure. ✪✪

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Your ability to see situations clearly will help you make decisions that will benefit you and improve the relationships you have with others. Your unique approach to learning and cultural differences will encourage assistance. Travel is encouraged. ✪✪✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Cash deals will be tempting. Before you give the go-ahead, make sure you have all your facts straight. Home improvement projects will turn out well, but the cost is something you have to consider. Your plans are likely to go over budget. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): You will face a problem if you neglect your responsibilities within a work or personal partnership. You are best to make amends quickly so you can move forward without delay. Inconclusive information must not lead to overreacting or undue blame. ✪✪✪

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Channel your energy into going above and beyond the call of duty when asked to do a job or work on a project. What you do in a timely fashion will be your ticket to bigger and better projects and monetary gains. ✪✪✪

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Competitive sports, socializing or spending time with the people you get the most from in return should take top priority. A trip that ensures both fun and learning will help you make decisions regarding your current and future lifestyle. ✪✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You have strong convictions and beliefs. You are intuitively intelligent.

Eugenia's Web sites: *eugenialast.com for confidential consultations, eugenialast.com/blog/ for Eugenia's blog and join Eugenia on twitter/facebook/linkedin*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

			5					8
	1	3			8	2	9	
	2				1		6	
1						7	4	
				4				
	3	6						5
	4		3				2	
	5	9	4			1	7	
7					6			

Difficulty Level ★★

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

PEPPERMINT TEA Solution: 4 letters

F	P	I	S	R	E	L	A	X	M	A	E	R	D	N
R	Y	E	N	O	H	C	A	L	C	I	U	M	I	D
E	S	S	E	R	P	H	C	N	E	R	F	K	U	E
S	P	T	T	L	C	A	L	M	I	L	S	L	Q	C
H	E	E	P	N	S	I	U	E	A	C	F	O	I	I
T	E	M	E	P	A	S	T	V	A	E	I	S	L	T
A	T	A	L	H	C	T	O	A	V	V	E	D	E	N
B	S	A	L	L	T	R	S	E	M	G	E	A	E	I
L	N	U	E	I	F	O	R	E	L	O	B	S	G	M
T	O	S	C	U	N	R	O	A	G	A	R	S	A	E
R	H	O	L	I	O	G	N	S	G	N	P	A	R	L
Y	L	G	C	C	R	A	M	P	S	I	O	U	E	B
D	E	V	I	T	A	N	I	M	R	A	C	C	V	U
O	E	V	R	E	S	I	T	I	S	A	N	E	E	O
B	R	E	T	A	W	C	T	E	E	W	S	R	B	D

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Analgesic, Aromatic, Bath, Beverage, Body, Calcium, Calm, Carminative, Cold, Cool, Cramps, Decongestant, Double Mint, Dream, Fever, Flavorful, Flu, French Press, Fresh, Healing, Honey, Iced, Leaves, Liquid, Medicinal, Muscles, Oil, Organic, Plant, Relax, Saucer, Serve, Sip, Skin, Sleep, Soothe, Spirit, Steep, Stem, Sweet, Teabag, Tisane, Water, Weight

Yesterday's Answer: Watermelon

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dba: Okadaya

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Additonal Requirements: All applicants must be of good health and have a good moral character, must be able to follow grooming standards, must be able to obtain health certificate, must be able to provide current police clearance, with reliable transporation and must agree to drug test. And can work in flexible hours.

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Restaurant Supervisor (1): Must be qualified in restaurant operations, customer service, menu planning, & reservation operations. Must be responsible for the supervision of staff as to dining areas cleanliness in appearance & outside grounds. Ensure any customers issues are addressed immediately and resolved in a manner which exceeds the customer's expectation. Also need to have basic Japanese oral skills. Must have an extensive knowledge of Japanese food products & be able to make orders & preparations.

Accountant (2): Must be efficient in handling financial records, statements, & reports. Have knowledge on all Taxes computation & filing. Must be able to budget & estimate purchasing costs & requisitions of merchandise necessary in the company.

Restaurant Waitress (5): Greeting Customers. Must be able to speak basic Japanese & efficient English & have a friendly & outgoing personality. Should be knowledgeable of the restaurant dishes, familiar with the entire menu the establishment offers. Can introduce & recommend daily specials as well as the restaurant's regular menu items. Continued services after the meal have been served and accept payments & other duties related.

Cook (4): Must be experienced & skilled in preparing Japanese cuisine including but not limited to sushi, sashimi, & tempura. Can prepare all menu items according to quantity menus, must know cutting and preparation techniques for each type of fish used in sushi rolls as well as how to prepare rice, sauces and seasonal ingredients, must ensure that ingredients are fresh, colorful and always in stock, that the all-important knives are sharp and clean, and that all equipment is in working order. Must be able to maintain kitchen & observe safety & sanitary food handling practices as well as other related duties.

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Gibson, Sano lead Twins over Tigers, 7-1

AP
Minnesota Twins designated hitter Miguel Sano watches the flight of his two-run home run off Detroit Tigers starting pitcher Shane Greene during the first inning of a baseball game in Minneapolis, Sunday, July 12, 2015.

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Kyle Gibson and the rest of the Twins' rotation have Minnesota in contention at the All-Star break even with almost no contribution from free-agent prize Ervin Santana.

Gibson won his fourth straight start, throwing seven strong innings, and rookie Miguel Sano hit a two-run homer to lead the Twins to a 7-1 win over the Detroit Tigers on Sunday.

Gibson (8-6) allowed only an unearned run and four hits. Danny Santana added two hits, including a two-run triple, for Minnesota, which enters the All-Star break after winning six of seven on its homestand. The Twins are in second place in the AL Central and hold the top wild-card spot.

Gibson recalled that manager Paul Molitor held a team meeting before the start of the homestand and told his players, "I know we've got the break coming up. Let's not look past these seven games."

"And we didn't," Gibson said.

"I think that speaks a lot to this team," he added. "We focus on the day that we're in, and we focus on the game that we're playing. And that has a lot to do with our leadership, and I think that's a quality that's really going to help us moving forward."

Gibson has allowed two runs or fewer in 11 of his 18 starts, including the past five. The right-hander's ground-ball heavy approach worked against the Tigers, who hit into three double plays. Gibson leads the majors with 22 double-play ground balls this season, and his ERA shrunk to 2.85.

The only run against Gibson came in the second when catcher Eric Fryer made an error throwing to second base and Danny Santana had trouble getting the ball out of his glove on a likely double play. Fryer's miscue snapped Minnesota's 10-game errorless streak, the longest for the team since May 2013.

Sano has hit safely in all but one of his 11 games this season and homered in the first inning off Greene for his second in the majors. Trevor Plouffe ended Greene's day with his 11th home run in the fifth.

Mets 5, Diamondbacks 3

Kirk Nieuwenhuis homered three times to help the New York Mets beat the Arizona Diamondbacks to complete a three-game sweep.

Nieuwenhuis homered twice off Diamondbacks starter Ruby De La Rosa (6-5), in the second and third innings and once off reliever Randall Delgado in the fifth. His homer off Delgado rang off the right field foul ball and drew a curtain call from the cheering crowd of 28,259.

Athletics 2, Indians 0

All-Star Sonny Gray pitched a two-hit shutout and allowed only three base runners, leading the Athletics to a win over the Indians on Sunday.

Gray (10-3) retired the first 10 hitters before Francisco Lindor's one-out single in the fourth. The right-hander walked David Murphy to lead off the fifth and retired 11 in a row until Giovanny Urshela's two-out single in the eighth.

Rays 4, Astros 3

Matt Moore got his first win since elbow surgery with help from the Tampa Bay bullpen and the Rays completed a three-game sweep by beating the Astros.

Moore (1-0) allowed three runs and five hits over five innings to get his first victory since Sept. 29, 2013 at Toronto. It was his third start after missing almost 15 months due to the surgery.

Marlins 8, Reds 1

Dan Haren repeatedly pitched out of jams and allowed only one run in six innings to help the Marlins beat the Reds.

The Reds stranded seven runners in scoring position against Haren, and threatened in all but one inning he worked. They went 1 for 11 with runners in scoring position against the right-hander.

Yankees 8, Red Sox 6

Alex Rodriguez doubled to break a sixth-inning tie, move into the top 25 on baseball's career hits list and help the Yankees beat the Red Sox.

The win gave the Yankees the edge in the three-game series and moved them 6 1/2 games in front of last-place Boston in the bunched-up AL East. New York leads the division by 3 1/2 games heading into the All-Star break.

Nationals 3, Orioles 2

Max Scherzer ended his impressive first half with another dominant performance, taking a three-hitter into the ninth inning to lead the Nationals to a victory over the Orioles.

Yunel Escobar had three hits and scored a run for the Nationals, who reached the All-Star break in first place in the NL East after taking two of three from their neighboring rivals.

Royals 11, Blue Jays 10

Paulo Orlando broke a tie with an eighth inning homer and Kendrys Morales hit a three-run homer as the Royals defeated the Blue Jays after blowing a seven-run advantage.

The Royals enter the All-Star break with an American League-leading 52 victories. Orlando hit a 2-1 Bo Schultz (0-1) pitch out to left to leadoff the eight.

Cubs 3, White Sox 1

Jake Arrieta pitched a two-hitter and also homered to lead the Cubs to a win over the White Sox.

Arrieta (10-5) struck out nine—including all three batters in the ninth—in his second complete game win of the season.

Padres 2, Rangers 1

Tyson Ross pitched 6 2-3 shutout innings as the Padres edged the Rangers.

Ross (6-7) extended his homerless streak to 86 2-3 innings over 14 starts, the current longest streak in the majors.

Giants 4, Phillies 2

Andrew Susac hit a three-run homer to back Chris Heston's superb start, and the Giants rolled past the last-place Phillies.

Heston (9-5) allowed one run and seven hits in 6 2-3 innings. He struck out seven and walked none to help send the reigning World Series champions into the All-Star break on a high note.

Angels 10, Mariners 3

Chris Iannetta hit a two-run home run and David Freese added a two-run double as part of a six-run sixth inning, and the Angels entered the All-Star break in first place in the American League West after a win over the Mariners.

The Angels won for the 11th time in 14 games and leaped past Houston into the AL West lead for the first time since April 17 after the Astros lost their sixth straight on Sunday. The Angels took advantage of three errors by Seattle and knocked around starter Taijuan Walker (7-7) for his worst outing in two months.

Dodgers 4, Brewers 3

Adrian Gonzalez hit a two-run homer to put the Dodgers ahead in the eighth inning, and NL West-leading Los Angeles beat the last-place Brewers.

Pedro Baez (2-1) got the victory with a strikeout in one inning of relief. Kenley Jansen pitched the ninth to earn his 16th save in 17 chances, including his last nine since June 12.

Greinke, Scherzer on track for Cy Young race

By NOAH TRISTER
AP BASEBALL WRITER

Last season's tightest major award vote in baseball was for the American League Cy Young, with Cleveland's Corey Kluber edging Seattle's Felix Hernandez by only 10 points.

Now it's the National League that looks like it could have a compelling race among its top pitchers. After Washington's Max Scherzer set the pace with a sensational stretch in June, Zack Greinke of the Los Angeles Dodgers has been making his own bid. Greinke hasn't allowed a run since June 13 and enters the All-Star break with a 1.39 ERA.

Scherzer has 150 strikeouts and hasn't walked a batter since June 14, but he also has four starts with at least four runs allowed. Greinke has only one.

Those two look like the Cy Young favorites at this point, although it would be foolish to count out Greinke's teammate, Clayton Kershaw, who has won the award three times in the last four years.

Here's a look at how the other award races are shaping up:

AL CY YOUNG: Kluber is following up his honor last year with another fine season—his 4-10 record is largely due to atrocious run support—but division rival Chris Sale of the Chicago White Sox may be the favorite. Houston's Dallas Keuchel is also in the mix but lacks Sale's flashy strikeout numbers.

NL MVP: Bryce Harper of the Nationals is the clear favorite here, and although Paul Goldschmidt is putting up comparable numbers, his Arizona Diamondbacks are well off the pace in the NL West. Harper's team is in first place, and that's the type of thing that often matters to voters.

AL MVP: Mike Trout is certainly a candidate to win his second MVP in a row, but this race still looks wide open. Josh Donaldson has given Toronto a lift, and Baltimore's Manny Machado could have a case with a big second half.

NL ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: Jacob deGrom of the New York Mets took this award last year on the strength of an impressive finish in August and September, but don't expect any late darkhorses to emerge this time. Kris Bryant of the Chicago Cubs and Joc Pederson of the Dodgers are well ahead of the rest of the field.

AL ROOKIE OF THE YEAR: The AL honor, on the other hand, is still very much up in the air. Devon Travis of the Blue Jays has been impressive, but star prospect Carlos Correa of the Astros has already matched Travis' total of seven homers—and Correa has only played in 32 games.

Here are a few more developments from around the majors:

SURGING

Pittsburgh stormed into the break with 13 wins in its last 16 games, pulling within 2 1/2 games of St. Louis atop the NL Central. Andrew McCutchen rebounded from a rough April, and the rotation is anchored by the impressive trio of Gerrit Cole, Francisco Liriano and A.J. Burnett.

Pittsburgh lost its first six extra-inning games this year but has now won six of its last seven.

FANTASY FOCUS

After going the entire month of June without giving up a run, San Francisco closer Santiago Casilla has allowed five in 2 2/3 innings over five appearances in July. The Giants have another experienced closer in their bullpen in Sergio Romo—although he's been ineffective as well lately - along with hard-throwing right-hander Hunter Strickland. It's a situation worth watching in the first few games after the break.

LINE OF THE WEEK

Kirk Nieuwenhuis was 7 for 66 on the season with no home runs before going deep three times for the Mets in their 5-3 win over Arizona on Sunday. He's now hitting .146 this year. Nieuwenhuis was traded by the Mets to the Los Angeles Angels in late May, then designated for assignment by the Angels a couple weeks later, at which point New York plucked him back off waivers. The three-homer game brought his career total to 16.

Spieth beats Gillis in playoff, wins John Deere Classic

SILVIS, Ill. (AP)—Jordan Spieth made it a lot tougher on himself than it needed to be.

In the end, Spieth got exactly what he was looking for from the John Deere Classic: a win and some positive energy ahead of the British Open.

Spieth beat Tom Gillis on the second hole of a playoff to win at TPC Deere Run on Sunday for his fourth victory of the season.

Gillis and Spieth, who opened the tournament with an even-par 71, finished the final round at 20-under 264. Zach Johnson and Danny Lee tied for third at 19 under.

"To be able to shoot 20-under in three rounds is nice momentum," Spieth said. "The finish, when I really didn't feel like tee to green I had much (Sunday), gives me a lot of momentum to draw on if I don't have my best stuff. "

The 46-year-old Gillis, who was attempting to become the oldest first-time winner on the PGA Tour in 20 years, sent an approach into the water. Spieth made par for his second win at this tournament in three years.

Now Spieth heads to the British Open in search of his third consecutive major championship.

Spieth is the first golfer to win four times before the Open Championship since Tiger Woods in 2000—and he silenced many of the critics who questioned why he played this tournament instead of heading overseas early to prepare for St. Andrews.

"I really didn't care anyways. I came here for a reason, and we accomplished that reason," Spieth said.

After shooting a career-best 10 under on Saturday, Spieth entered the final round with a two-shot lead.

But the field caught up to Spieth when he turned in a pedestrian front nine.

Spieth bogeyed two of his first three holes and was soon passed by the likes of Gillis and Johnson. Spieth was even at the turn and two shots back of Gillis, who in 171 previous PGA Tour starts had only finished in the top three twice.

Spieth's low point was a bogey on the par-4 11th hole after a putt from the fringe went left.

But Gillis played his final six holes at even par. Spieth roared back into contention with four birdies in five holes, including a 21-foot chip from the fringe on No. 16.

Spieth had a 30-foot putt for the win on No. 18, but he pushed it left. He nearly won on the first hole of the playoff, but his 33-foot try lipped out.

Even though Spieth ultimately outlasted the field, he knows he has some work to do—specifically with his driver, which abandoned him at times this weekend—if he hopes to make it three majors in a row.

"I need to fine tune my driver. I love where my putter is at. My pace control, my speed is awesome right now," Spieth said.

Gillis matched Spieth with a par on the first hole in sudden death. But a tee shot that went into the rough led to a shot in the water, effectively ending his bid for an elusive victory.

Gillis shot a 7-under 64 in the final round.

"When you're going to be 47, the window is closing," Gillis said. "What I saw (Sunday) and the last three days, I'd have to say makes me think I've still got some tread on the tires left."

AP

Jordan Spieth watches his tee shot on the second hole during the final round of the John Deere Classic golf tournament Sunday, July 12, 2015, in Silvis, Ill.

Jordan's change of heart has some questioning moratorium

By TIM REYNOLDS and BRIAN MAHONEY
AP BASKETBALL WRITERS

Doc Rivers gave a quick answer when asked about DeAndre Jordan coming back to the Los Angeles Clippers.

"He never left," the coach said.

Technically, that's true.

The Dallas Mavericks might disagree as they reel from the fallout of Jordan's Texas two-step, which renewed the debate about when a deal is a deal, and whether change is needed to the NBA's moratorium period.

"From afar, it's a little bit concerning from a team perspective just because of the precedent. You'd like to think when you look somebody in the eye and shake their hand and say, `We have a deal,' that you have a deal," Suns general manager Ryan McDonough said Thursday.

"But at the same time, you understand that the way the rules are written from the current moratorium structure, the agreements aren't binding until the player puts pen to paper and signs a contract."

The moratorium, starting July 1 and lasting until the salary cap is set for the coming season, could be a hot topic now at NBA meetings in Las Vegas next week. The National Basketball Players Association said it supports the right of both players and teams to consider their options during the moratorium, which is scheduled to last 11 days next year.

Hey, could be worse. It lasted all of July when first implemented in 1999.

"Everybody realizes it's something that has to be looked at," Brooklyn general manager Billy King said.

Jordan formally re-signed with the Clippers on Thursday, ending one of the strangest sagas in recent free-agent history. He verbally committed to the Mavericks on Friday, then a Clippers contingent arrived at his Houston home Wednesday for what apparently was a last-ditch push to keep him, and the Mavericks lost their man.

A handshake deal, in this case, was no deal.

"We all walk into these conversations understanding that as with any business contract, it's not a deal until the paper is signed," union spokeswoman Tara Greco said.

Dallas owner Mark Cuban was predictably unhappy. He got fined $25,000 by the NBA earlier in the week for raving about what Jordan would mean to the Mavericks—he violated a rule of the moratorium by talking about a player who wasn't under contract—then wound up not getting the deal signed.

Cuban turned to social media to vent, never mentioning Jordan by name.

"I don't think the time is right to say anything beyond the facts that he never responded to me at all yesterday," Cuban wrote on the Cyber Dust messaging app. "Not once. To this minute I have not heard anything from him since Tuesday night."

That was one of the biggest talking points around the league Thursday: It wasn't so much that Jordan changed his mind, but apparently no one actually told the Mavericks when the rest of the NBA world seemed to be following it in real time on Twitter.

Rivers flatly said "no" when asked if Jordan should have told Dallas of his change of heart. Not everyone agreed.

"I don't see anything wrong with changing your mind, but you need to be a man and just tell them why you decided," Miami guard Goran Dragic told The Associated Press.

It's impossible to say how much of a domino effect Jordan's last-minute flip affected free agency for other franchises and players. If he had announced early he was staying with the Clippers, teams—including the Mavs—may have changed their strategies.

At least six quality big men agreed to deals with other teams after Jordan committed to Dallas, so it's a safe bet there was at least some ripple effect in the market from there.

"I think any time something like this happens, there's always going to be talk and there's always going to be talk about rules being changed and things like that," said Tyson Chandler, who left Dallas for Phoenix. "But it was a verbal agreement, so he had the option to change his mind. That was his decision as a man and that's something he'll have to stand with."

Former NBA executive Stu Jackson wrote on Twitter that change to the moratorium system "is imminent," though nothing is currently planned.

The league views the moratorium as a way to ensure that multiple teams can talk to players, rather than one swooping in when the market opens—or earlier, if not playing by the rules—and locking him up immediately.

"The moratorium period fairly benefits both NBA teams and players by providing the time to have whatever discussions they deem necessary and the opportunity to consider multiple options before entering into binding agreements," league spokesman Mike Bass said.

Free agency started July 1, and players can agree to deals at any time after that window opens. But they could not become official until 12:01 a.m. Eastern time Thursday—the start of the new league year.

"We have to look at it and maybe start the signing, everything starts the same time when the moratorium ends rather than starting July 1," King said.

The Clippers announced at 12:05 a.m. Thursday that they were keeping Jordan, releasing a tweet saying, "We're officially centered."

"The rules have been the rules for a while now," Orlando GM Rob Hennigan said. "I don't think this is the first time that something like this has happened. But that doesn't mean that it shouldn't be looked at."

LeBron signs 2-year contract with Cavaliers

CLEVELAND (AP)—The Cavaliers can exhale for another year. They've got LeBron James' signature on a contract.

The four-time MVP, who brought the Cavs back from irrelevancy to the brink of an NBA championship this season, signed his two-year, $47 million deal on Friday. The commitment allows him to maintain financial flexibility and keeps pressure on Cleveland's front office to keep building.

The deal includes a player option for the 2016-17 season. He finalized the agreement shortly before hosting a private screening for a new movie in which he has a supporting role.

He's the unquestioned star with the Cavs, who are thrilled he'll be back and expect him to complete his career wearing wine and gold.

"LeBron's re-signing today is a reflection and continuation of his strong, personal commitment to help deliver championships to Northeast Ohio and Cavs fans everywhere," general manager David Griffin said. "We share this deep level of commitment with him. His impact upon this team, his community and the game are impossible to overstate and we look forward to continuing on our mission together."

Before the screening for "Trainwreck," the comedy he co-stars in with Amy Schumer and Bill Hader, James said he's been pleased with the Cavs' offseason moves. The team is still in talks with forward Tristan Thompson and may re-sign guard J.R. Smith, who opted out of his deal for next season.

"It's been good so far, but we have a lot of work to do," said James, who had the film shown at a movie theater near his home in Akron. "We still got to re-sign Tristan. Hopefully we can bring back J.R. as well and see if there's some other free agents out there that'd love to come here and play if we're able to do that. We definitely don't want to come back the same team. We want to come back better.

"But right now, we've been doing so far, so good."

James' signing comes a day before the one-year anniversary of his return to Cleveland after spending four seasons in Miami.

The 30-year-old has indicated he will finish his playing career with the Cavs, who went from being a lottery team to Eastern Conference champions in James' first season back.

James will likely opt out of his contract again next summer so he can cash in when the league's salary cap jumps thanks to a new $24 billion TV deal.

James averaged 25.3 points, 7.4 assists and 6.0 rebounds in 69 regular-season games. However, his biggest contributions may have come off the floor as his leadership helped instill a belief in a Cleveland team that dropped to the bottom of the league during the four years he was with the Heat.

He scored in double figures in all 69 games, increasing his consecutive double-digit scoring streak to 641—third-longest in history.

Despite missing 13 games—he sat out two weeks to rest a sore back and knee—he was one of just three players to amass 1,700 points, 500 assists, 400 rebounds and 100 steals.

The 11-time All-Star finished third in the MVP voting, which seemed to motivate him during the postseason.

In 20 playoff games, he averaged 30.1 points, 11.3 rebounds and 8.5 assists, joining Hall of Famer Oscar Robertson as the only players to average at least 30, 11 and 8 in a postseason.

James saved his best for last, dominating the finals but failing to lead the Cavs to a championship as they were beaten in six games by the Golden State Warriors. James averaged 35.8 points, 13.3 rebounds and 8.8 assists, the best statistical performance in finals history.

James was joined at the screening by guard Mo Williams, who signed his two-year contract on Friday. This will be Williams' second stint with the Cavs. He'll serve as All-Star Kyrie Irving's backup, a needed upgrade for the Cavs, who may still re-sign playoff hero Matthew Dellavedova.

‘Serena Slam’ done, Grand Slam up next

LONDON (AP)—Before Serena Williams moves on from completing a second “Serena Slam” to pursuing tennis’ first true Grand Slam in more than a quarter-century, it’s worth pausing to appreciate what she’s done.

First of all, there are the statistics. And what statistics they are:

She’s won 21 Grand Slam titles; only Steffi Graf, with 22, has more in the Open era of professional tennis (the all-time record is Margaret Court’s 24).

Her 6-4, 6-4 victory over Garbine Muguruza in Saturday’s final gave Williams six Wimbledon titles; only Martina Navratilova (with nine) and Graf (with seven) have more. Williams also has a half-dozen trophies each from the U.S. Open and Australian Open, along with three from the French Open.

She’s won 28 Grand Slam matches in a row and four consecutive major titles over two seasons, something last done by—guess who?—Williams in 2002-03, when she coined the term “Serena Slam.”

At 33, she is the oldest woman to win a major title in the Open era, nearly a month older than Navratilova was at Wimbledon in 1990.

It’s all impressive. And it all helps Williams believe she can continue this remarkable run at the U.S. Open, which begins in late August in New York. A trophy there would give Williams a calendar-year Grand Slam, which no one—not even Roger Federer—has accomplished in tennis since Graf did it in 1988.

Only two other women (Maureen Connolly in 1953, and Court in 1970) and two men (Don Budge in 1938, and Rod Laver in 1962 and 1969) have pulled off the feat, and none of them had to deal with the intense media scrutiny of this day and age.

“I feel like I’ll be OK. I feel like if I can do the `Serena Slam,’ I will be OK heading into the Grand Slam. Like I always say, `There’s 127 other people that don’t want to see me win.’ Nothing personal, they just want to win,” Williams said, referring to the size of the field at a major tournament. “I had a really tough draw (at Wimbledon). This gives me confidence that if I had this draw, I can do it again. I’ll just do the best I can.”

Her best is the best there is, and might ever have been. But her story is about so much more than the numbers associated with her greatness. There’s the resilience she’s shown away from the court, too, dealing with various injuries, none more worrisome than what happened in the aftermath of her 2010 Wimbledon championship.

A few days following that final, Williams cut both feet on broken glass while leaving a restaurant in Germany. She needed two operations on her right foot. Then she got blood clots in her lungs, and needed to inject herself with a blood thinner. Those shots led to a pool of blood gathering under her stomach’s skin, requiring another procedure in the hospital.

She would be off the tour for 10 months, and go two years between major titles. Since then, though, she has won eight of the past 13 Grand Slam tournaments.

On Saturday evening, hours after admiring the gold letters of her name on the board in a hallway of the Centre Court building listing Wimbledon’s champions, Williams sat with a small group of reporters for one final interview.

As she picked at the remnants of ankle tape near a jagged scar on her lower right leg, Williams was asked whether, as she looks back on her career, she divides it into phases.

She began to answer, then paused and said: “Or there was that stage where I was in the hospital. Like, that wasn’t so fun. I was doing really well, and then I ended up in the hospital. So that was kind of devastating. But ultimately, I think that stage set up this stage, you know? And ... yeah, I think it worked out for me.”

Certainly did.

CNMI still awaiting word on Games performance

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The final batch of CNMI athletes and officials left last week for the XV Pacific Games in Papua New Guinea but news about their performance in the quadrennial sporting event remains to be reported, as Internet connection in the CNMI is still unstable.

Internet connection in some businesses went back yesterday but the signal was either slow or unstable.

CNMI bodybuilders Donivan Mendiola and Aaron Tomokane along with Commonwealth Bodybuilding Federation president John Davis were able to leave Saipan on Tuesday last week thus avoiding the cancellation of the flights that happened the following day.

The four-member golf team, anticipating the coming storm, left at 9:45pm on Friday. The team is composed of Joe “Kamikaze” Camacho, Harry Nakamura, Franco Santos, and Louie Tilipao.

The bodybuilding event is only one day, on Monday, while golf also started yesterday along with beach volleyball where Andrew Johnson and Clay McCullough-Stearns are representing the CNMI.

Sailing and Va’a held its final day of competition last Saturday, while Sunday’s open water swim ended all swimming events.

Medal-rich athletics begins today at the Sir John Guise Sports Complex with lone CNMI bet Beo Ngirchongor hoping to improve his times.

Triathlon was the other sport that the CNMI bets competed in. The 35-member CNMI delegation is expected to be back after the July 18 closing ceremonies.

Even the result of the opening match of the CNMI Majors All-Star team against China in the 2015 Asia Pacific Middle East Little League Regional Baseball Tournament and long distance runner Seiya Eda’s performance in the XXVIII Summer World University Games could not be known.

The CNMI All-Stars left last Saturday to compete in the AS-PAC regionals set from July 13 to 21 at the Guilin Institute of Tourism in Guilin, China. They played against China in their opening game in Pool A.

Their next schedule of matches will be against Saudi Arabia, Hong Kong, and the Philippines.

Eda, on the other hand, ran in the 1,500-meter event last Wednesday in the Summer Universiade at the Gwangju World Cup Stadium in Seogu District in Gwangju City, South Korea.

The Saipan Southern High School graduate, who is accompanied by coach and head of delegation Kurt Barnes, is aiming to also record a new personal best time.

DJOKOVIC

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“You sort of walk away empty-handed. For me, a finalist trophy is not the same,” a grim-faced Federer said. “Everybody knows that.”

At Wimbledon in 2014, Federer won 88 of 89 service games through the semifinals, then was broken four times by Djokovic during the five-set final.

This fortnight, Federer won 89 of 90 service games entering the final, then again was broken four times.

“It takes a little bit of everything: recognizing the moment, having the good intuition, following your instincts of where the serve is going to go, being in the right balance,” Djokovic said. “I mean, it’s not that easy, especially with Roger’s precision and accuracy.”

Djokovic’s serve was stout, too: He saved six of seven break points. On a windy afternoon, Federer was simply not the same height-of-his-powers player who defeated Andy Murray in the semifinals. Pressured by Djokovic’s body-twisting ability to extend points, Federer committed 35 unforced errors; Djokovic made 16.

Federer and Djokovic have played 40 times; each has won 20.

“Novak played not only great today,” said Federer, 33, the oldest Wimbledon finalist since 1974, “but the whole two weeks, plus the whole year, plus last year, plus the year before that.”

Federer might very well be the greatest of all time, as some say, but right now, the best in the men’s game is Djokovic.

He won the Australian Open in January, then was the runner-up at the French Open last month, denying him a career Grand Slam. Go further back, and Djokovic has reached 15 of the past 20 major finals, winning eight.

Still, most spectators were pulling for Federer. So quiet between points that pre-serve ball bounces could be heard, the crowd voiced a collective “ahttp://wwwww” of lament after a fault by Federer or a midpoint “ooooh” of excitement when he conjured up something exquisite.

“More or less, anywhere I play against Roger, it’s the same,” said Djokovic, who barked at some fans late in the fourth set.

Federer rued letting the opening set get away. Twice, he held a set point and failed to convert. The tiebreaker ended flatly on Federer’s double-fault, part of a run in which Djokovic took 14 of 15 points.

“For me to win this match,” Federer said, “I probably had to win the first set.”

He regrouped, staving off seven set points in the second and taking that tiebreaker.

So 110 minutes in, they were tied. Here’s how close it was: In the first set, each man won 37 points; in the second set, each won 51.

At the changeover, Djokovic yelled at himself. Maybe it helped, because his second break gave him a 2-1 edge in the third, and he finished that set off quickly following a 20-minute rain delay. Federer failed to put up much resistance in the fourth, getting broken twice more.

Soon enough, Djokovic was crouching down to pluck a few blades of Centre Court grass and slide them in his mouth.

He equaled his coach, Boris Becker, with three trophies at Wimbledon. Add five Australian Opens and one U.S. Open, and his nine major titles push him ahead of folks such as Andre Agassi, Jimmy Connors and Ivan Lendl and put the 28-year-old Serb more than halfway to Federer’s record of 17.

“He’s clearly making a big name for himself,” Federer said, “having won as many times now as he has in these different Slams.”

MBT

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phins to 6 points in the third and were never threatened after that.

The Dolphins’ shots failed to hit their mark and committed numerous errors that Guam converted into points. If the field goals were recorded the Dolphins’ shooting percentage was below 30 percent. Missed free throws also did not help their cause.

Michael Min scattered 18 points to lead all scorers, while Napu San Luis, Gabriel Simon, DeAndre Cruz, and Mark Temerowski added 13, 12, 11, and 10 respectively.

Angelo Factor tallied 11 points for the Dolphins, while Christian Arceo and Dalton Dancoe chipped in 10 and 8 markers each.

Earlier, Palau scored a 70-point humbling of the Marianas Tataga, 102-32, to bounce back from a 61-56 loss to the Dolphins on opening day.

All Palau players used by coach Logan Ngiriou scored in the game with M.J. Baysa compiling 24 points to lead four of his teammates that end up in twin digits.

Omar Ganac tallied 16 markers, Wallace Worswick had 15, while Roldan De Lina and Garnett Sungino combined for 20 points.

No Tataga player reached double figures with J.P. Cruz scoring 8, while Elijah Quiroz and Matthew Richardson tallying 6 and 5 points apiece. John Ichihara and Roger Valencia made 4 points each while Joseph Kisa and Matthew Ong rounded up the scoring with 3 and 2 markers, respectively.

First Game

Palau 102 – Baysa 24, Ganac 16, Worswick 15, De Lina 10, Sungino 10, Reklai 8, Remoket 6, Timarong 5, Andreas 2, Kingzio 2, Tarkong 2.

Marianas Tataga 32 – Cruz 8, Quiroz 6, Richardson 5, Ichihara 4, Valencia 4, Kisa 3, Ong 2.

Scoring by quarters: 33-2, 52-11, 80-19, 102-32.

Second Game

Guam 94 – Min 18, San Luis 13, Simon 12, Cruz 11, Temerowski 10, Grape 9, Barcinas 6, Hseih 6, Salas 5, Calvo 2, Terlaje 2.

Marianas Dolphins 41 – Factor 11, Arceo 10, Dancoe 8, Alipio 4, Ogumoro 4, Cobacha 2, Tengco 2.

Scoring by quarters: 23-11, 56-19, 73-25, 94-41.

NMI

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Guam and was trailing 10-2 against the Philippines when play was halted due to curfew since the game stretched all the way to 1am.

The Philippines was declared the winner after tournament organizers consulted Little League headquarters in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania.

The CNMI was blanked by Chinese-Taipei, 0-8, but they bounced back with a 7-6 win over the Philippines in the second round. The Commonwealth Big Leaguers lost their last two games against Guam, 5-6, and Chinese-Taipei, 1-25.

Chinese-Taipei then earned the World Series berth to Easley in South Carolina after the tournament was cut short by an approaching storm.

Rogolifoi said that he knows it would be impossible for them to beat Chinese-Taipei but he added that his wards could have at least gave the reigning back-to-back ASPAC champions a run for their money.

“Chinese-Taipei is a country of more than a million people and the CNMI has like 50,000. So we know that Chinese-Taipei will be sending a strong team since they have a larger pool for the selection of players,” said Rogolifoi.

“I ran out of good pitchers against Chinese-Taipei in the second game that’s why it was a blowout loss. I’m not making excuses but mentally the boys gave up instead of fighting back. It was a mental lapse that resulted to errors,” Rogolifoi added.

Despite the disappointing finish the Northern Marianas Sports Association executive director still commended his players.

“I still give them credit for trying. I think this team and our players need more international exposure. They should learn how to think during games, read the defense, and anticipate plays.”

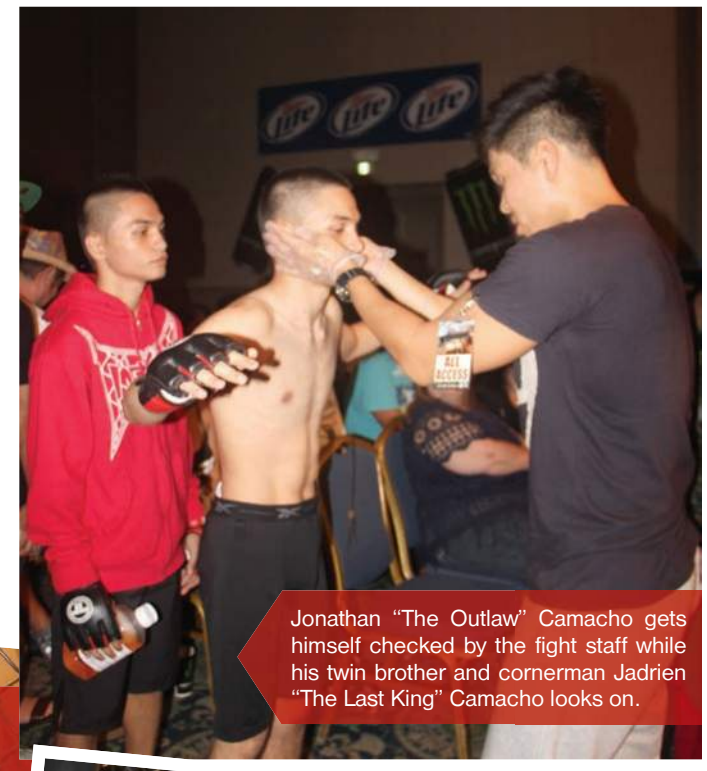
“Good thing that Chinese-Taipei came and played because I really wanted the All-Star team to see how a world class team play and learn from the best,” Rogolifoi ended.

Rites of Passage 18: Warpath

PHOTOS By JON PEREZ

Team Zalaka's Timothy Salas makes his way to the cage to fight Down2Scrap's Jonathan "The Outlaw" Camacho in the Rites of Passage 18: Warpath last July 3 at the Saipan World Resort's Royal Taga Hall.

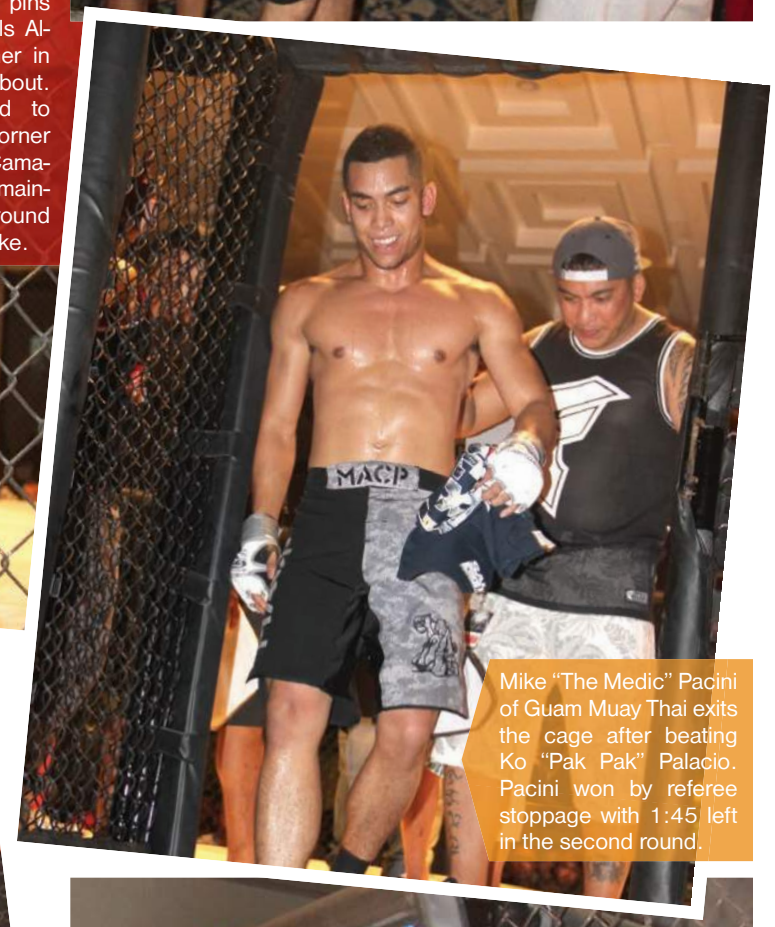
ZengZung Tinian's Renz "The Intense" Benghit, left, tries to take down HighBloodPressure Guam's Frank "Hellboy" Quidachay.



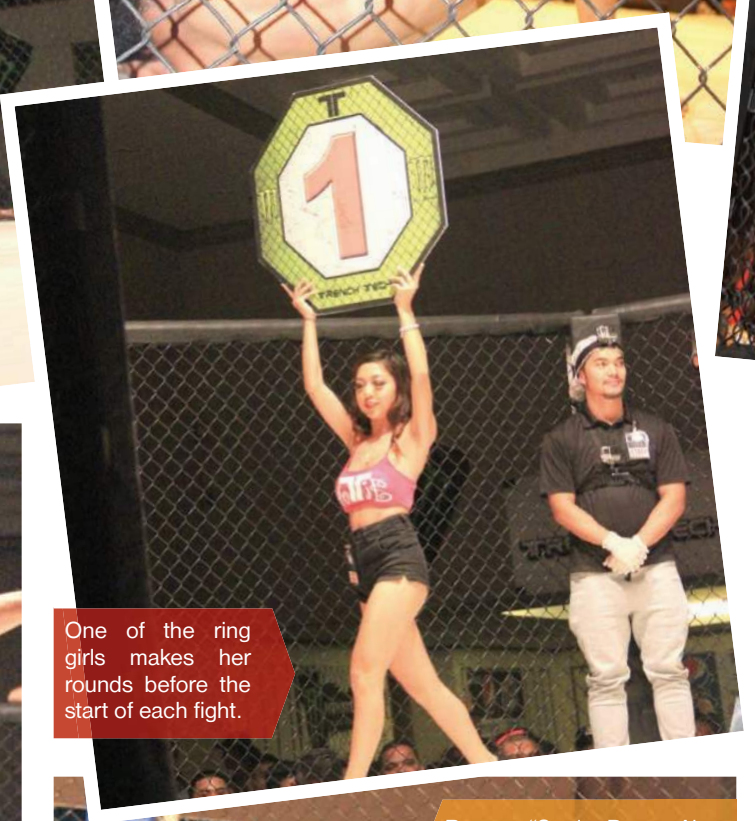
Jonathan "The Outlaw" Camacho gets himself checked by the fight staff while his twin brother and cornerman Jadrien "The Last King" Camacho looks on.

Jadrien "The Last King" Camacho pins down A.J. Smalls Aldan at the corner in their undercard bout. Smalls managed to get out of the corner and defeated Camacho with 2:56 remaining in the first round via guillotine choke.

HighBloodPressure Guam's Ernie Santos, right, lands a punch on Trench Tech's Jordan "The Machine" Manglona in their flyweight title match.

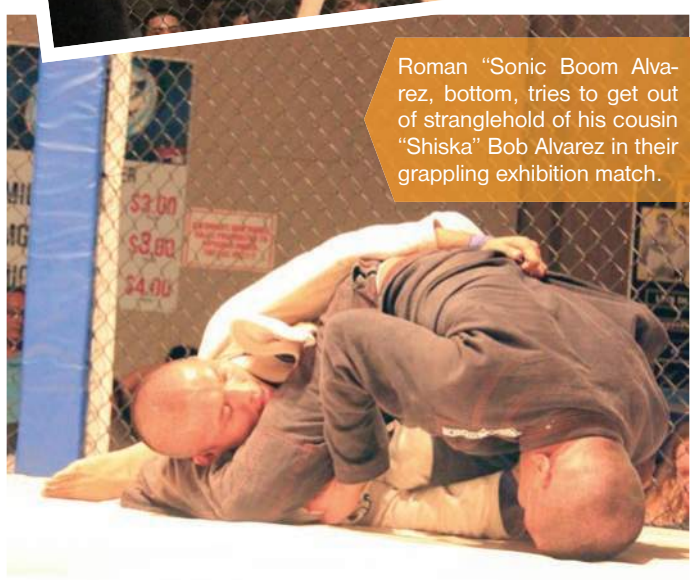


Mike "The Medic" Pacini of Guam Muay Thai exits the cage after beating Ko "Pak Pak" Palacio. Pacini won by referee stoppage with 1:45 left in the second round.



One of the ring girls makes her rounds before the start of each fight.

TrenchTech promoter Cuki Alvarez, right, thanks the crowd for supporting MMA.



Roman "Sonic Boom Alvarez, bottom, tries to get out of stranglehold of his cousin "Shiska" Bob Alvarez in their grappling exhibition match.

Ko "Pak Pak" Palacios enters the cage before facing Mike "The Medic" Pacini.

Gibson, Sano lead Twins over Tigers, 7-1

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Sports

'Serena Slam' done, Grand Slam up next

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Djokovic wins 3rd Wimbledon title, 9th major

By HOWARD FENDRICH
AP TENNIS WRITER

LONDON (AP)—A game away from a third Wimbledon championship and ninth Grand Slam title, Novak Djokovic sized up a 108 mph serve from none other than Roger Federer and stretched to smack a cross-court forehand return winner.

Two points later, Djokovic again took the measure of a serve from Federer, this one at 123 mph, and delivered a down-the-line backhand for another return winner. After this one, Djokovic bellowed.

"I roared because I felt like that's the moment," Djokovic would say later. "Now is the time for me to close this match out."

One forehand winner later, he did. For the second year in a row, Djokovic solved Federer's superb serve in the final at the All England Club. And for the second year in a row, Federer's bid for a record eighth championship at the grass-court tournament ended with a defeat against Djokovic.

» Beats Federer in 4 sets

This time, the match was even as can be through two sets, before the No. 1-seeded Djokovic grabbed ahold of it and wouldn't let go, beating No. 2 Federer 7-6 (1), 6-7 (10), 6-4, 6-3 Sunday thanks to brilliant returning.

"It feels, obviously, good when you make a return winner out of Roger's serve on the grass," Djokovic said, "but it doesn't happen too often."

Over the past three seasons, Federer has reached two Grand Slam finals—both at Wimbledon, both against Djokovic, both losses.

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AP
Novak Djokovic of Serbia kisses the trophy after winning the men's singles final against Roger Federer of Switzerland at the All England Lawn Tennis Championships in Wimbledon, London, Sunday July 12, 2015. Djokovic won the match 7-6, 6-7, 6-4, 6-3.

Visiting teams school NMI in MBT

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Guam and Palau went on attack mode early on to school the host's two teams in Day 2 of the 2015 Micronesian Basketball Tournament U15 yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Guam cruised to a 94-41 win over the Marianas Dolphins for its second win in the western division's regional tournament for players in the Under-15 age group, while Palau blitzed past Marianas Tataga, 103-32.

Guam trounced the Marianas Alu'u, 101-27, in Sunday's last game.

Guam scored in bunches in the second period to pull away from a 23-11 advantage in the opening period. Guam outscored the Dolphins, 33-8, for a 56-19 edge at the turn.

They then held the Dol-

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JON PEREZ
Guam's Equardo Calvo, left, gets past the defense of the Marianas Dolphins' Ezekiel Quiroz in their game in the 2015 Micronesian Basketball Tournament U15 yesterday at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

'NMI Big Leaguers should toughen up mentally'

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Mental toughness is what the CNMI Big League team lacked during the recently concluded 2015 Asia Pacific Middle East Junior, Senior, and Big League Regional Baseball Tournament hosted by Saipan.

Team CNMI finished with a 2-4 record to end up tied with Guam and the Philippines behind the 6-0 record of Chinese-Taipei, which earned the World Series berth after the double elimination round.

"We could have two more games—our first match against the Philippines and in the second round over Guam. They are prepared physically but I've been also telling them to be ready mentally," said team manager Tony Rogolifoi in an interview with the *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

Rogolifoi, who guided the CNMI to the 2006 Micronesian Games and 2011 Pacific Games gold medals, said those two games could have given them a better record behind undefeated Chinese-Taipei.

"We beat Guam in our first game and was having a good performance against the Philippines but lost to due to curfew. We beat the Philippines in the second round but lost to Guam. We could have a better record of four wins and two losses and could have played against Chinese-Taipei in the finals," he added.

Team CNMI opened the tournament with a 3-2 win over

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JON PEREZ
CNMI Big League manager Tony Rogolifoi, second left, talks to the infielders during a break in their opening game against Guam in the recently concluded in the 2015 Asia Pacific Junior, Senior, Big League Baseball Regional Tournament.